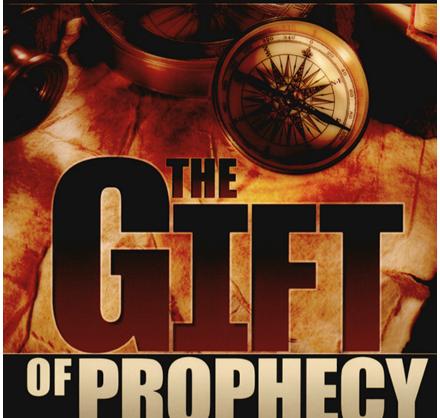
# ELLEN G. WHITE ESTATE

Edited by **ALBERTO R. TIMM** and **DWAIN N. ESMOND** 



**IN SCRIPTURE AND HISTORY** 

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#### **Foreword**

Seventh-day Adventists are a prophetic people, living in a prophetic time, and delivering a prophetic message to a world bereft of hope and salvation. To fulfill our unique role in trying times, we must depend upon the guidance of the Holy Spirit as never before. The gift of prophecy, one of many charisms showered on the people of God by the Holy Spirit, represents God's effort to communicate to and through human beings as He prepares a people to meet Him in peace. GOP 7.1

True prophecy—that of predicting the future, as well as its many other facets—is impossible for human beings to produce, but not for God. It falls neatly within His portfolio of divine responsibilities. It was the prophet Amos who declared: "Surely the Lord God does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7, NKJV). Beginning first in Eden with the pronouncement of the proto-gospel (Gen. 3:15) and onward to the present day, God has not left His people without a sure prophetic word. Peter continues the theme in his now-famous explanation of the divine/human nexus of prophetic discourse: GOP 7.2

We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost (2 Peter 1:19-21).GOP 7.3

The apostle Paul states, in no uncertain terms, that one of the prized gifts that God bestows for the edification of His church and unity in the faith (*Eph. 4:13*) is the gift of prophecy (*1 Cor. 12:10*). Paul further urges us to "pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy" (*1 Cor. 14:1*, NKJV). Centuries before Paul, the prophet Joel revealed that in the last days God would pour out His "Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions" (*Joel 2:28*, NKJV). These messages should fill our hearts with eager anticipation as we see the outpouring of the Holy

Spirit to complete God's mission and hasten the return of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. GOP 7.4

Yet how are we to determine when the Spirit is working in the life of one whom God calls? Amid the din of spiritual background noise, how do we differentiate the called from those who simply call out? This important volume, which you hold in your hand, is designed to answer these and other critical questions about the inauguration and exercise of the gift of prophecy. GOP 7.5

While not completely comprehensive, *The Gift of Prophecy in Scripture and History* traces God's use of men and women to comfort, guide, warn, and at times pronounce judgment on His people and the nations around them. As you read this work you will learn the distinguishing marks of God's messengers while marveling at His willingness to use flawed individuals in His great plan of redemption. *GOP* 7.6

You will also see that God did not cease to call prophets with the close of the New Testament canon. Indeed, Seventh-day Adventists believe that Ellen G. White represents a modern-day manifestation of the gift of prophecy. She never called herself a prophet—though she did not quibble with those who chose to refer to her that way—yet the insights God gave her have proven the authenticity of her calling. She saw herself as a messenger of the Lord, summoned—not unlike other noncanonical prophets—to lead God's people back to His Word as their rule and practice. Her Christocentric message of God's love for humanity, coupled with plaintive appeals for repentance and faithfulness, still challenge God's people today. GOP 8.1

It is our hope and prayer that as you read this seminal text on the gift of prophecy in Scripture and history, you will see in it much more than scholarly considerations of esoteric matter. We pray that you will leave with a settled belief in God, His prophets, and the sure word of prophecy that will usher in our Savior's soon return. GOP 8.2

—G. T. Ng Chair, Ellen G. White Estate Board Secretary, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

### Introduction

Young children love to play hide-and-seek. In fact, when we were young, we most likely played this game. You hid in places you were certain that you could not be found—either by your parents or by other children who were playing the game with you. The game ends when the person doing the searching finds those who are hidden. GOP 9.1

Since the fall of Adam and Eve (Gen. 3), human beings have been hiding from God, only the stakes in this game of hide-and-seek could not be higher. In the Garden of Eden God came in search of our first parents with the question "Where are you?" (verse 9, NIV). That question continues to echo down through human history. The Bible is filled with the record of God's never-ending search for those He created, and today God continues to search for His children. God's desire is to reconcile His lost children back to Himself, and one of the special means through which He communicates His offer of salvation to fallen humanity is divinely called prophets. GOP 9.2

The Gift of Prophecy in Scripture and History opens windows into this incredible story by providing insightful theological reflections on the prophetic gift as manifested at crucial moments in salvation history. As suggested by the title, the book is divided into two parts. Part I, Biblical Studies, gives an overview of the prophetic gift in the Old Testament (Jin Moskala) and New Testament (Ekkehardt Mueller). Special attention is given to the subjects of prophetic revelation and inspiration (Angel M. Rodriguez); how Bible writers quoted other Bible writings (Clinton Wahlen); the historical setting as seen through contemporary ancient Near Eastern literature (Elias Brasil de Souza): and how various writers dealt with and expressed emotions in their writings (ChantalJ. Klingbeil and Gerald A. Klingbeil). This section also contains a thoughtful article that uncovers several of Ellen White's insights into the original meaning of the biblical text (Richard M. Davidson); a chapter that grapples with what the expression "to prophesy" in 1 Corinthians 14 means (Larry L. Lichtenwalten); and a final one regarding the meaning of "spirit of prophecy" in the Revelation of John Stefanovic). GOP 9.3

Part II, a series of Historical Studies, surveys how the gift of prophecy was understood in ancient and medieval Christianity (John W. Reeve and Rodrigo Galiza); by the Reformers of the sixteenth century (Denis Fortin); as well as in American religious history (Michael W. Campbell). Following this historical background. the discussion deals specifically with topics related to the prophetic ministry of Ellen G. White. There are helpful discussions regarding how early Sabbathkeeping Adventists accepted her as a true prophet (Theodore N. Levterov); her special witness to Jesus and Scripture (Merlin D. Burt); her emphasis and practical commitment to the sola Scriptura principle (Alberto R. Timm); how she used Scripture (Frank M. Hasel); and even her use of extrabiblical sources (Jud Lake). The final chapters deal respectively with Ellen White's thoughts on mission (David J. B. Trim) and her personal commitment to service, as demonstrated by her "dedicated hands" (James R. Nix). The volume concludes with a chapter on how to make Ellen White relevant to third-generation millennials (Dwight K. Nelson), GOP 9.4

The overall content of the book is enriched by four appendices that comprise (1) the statements on the gift of prophecy found in the six versions of the Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists; (2) numerous statements of confidence in Ellen White's prophetic gift voted by the delegates to various General Conference sessions; (3) the 1982 document entitled "The Inspiration and Authority of the Ellen G. White Writings"; and (4) Ted N. C. Wilson's Sabbath morning sermon for the international Gift of Prophecy Symposium, Andrews University, October 15-18, 2015. GOP 10.1

The story of God's never-ending search for His fallen creatures, including His use of special individuals whom He has called to be His prophets, reminds us that in our sinful state we all are lost. The wonder is that we all can be found thanks to God's never-ending search for us, as described in *The Gift of Prophecy in Scripture and HistoryGOP 10.2* 

—James R. Nix Director, Ellen G. White Estate

# **Acknowledgments**

It probably goes without saying that a book of this magnitude and scope is no small undertaking. From its inception we were keenly aware of the challenges we would face in attempting to track the gift of prophecy in Scripture and history. There was the obvious hurdle of the subject matter itself, namely the movement and work of the Holy Spirit, who gives the gift of prophecy. How to assemble a group of scholars who could discern the manifestation of the Spirit's work in Scripture and history and then relate their findings in an understandable way was itself a Spirit-led enterprise. We therefore want to thank God for guiding our efforts. *GOP 11.1* 

We were heartened by the support of colleagues around the globe who saw light in the project and offered their expertise as needed. Their hard work and dedication were critical to producing *The Gift of Prophecy in Scripture and HistoryGOP 11.2* 

We especially want to recognize G. T. Ng and the board members of the Ellen G. White Estate for their assistance in this venture. In addition to voting the project, the White Estate board offered financial assistance to help defray some of the production costs associated with this volume. Jim Nix, director of the White Estate, has been an enthusiastic ally of this book project from the start. Without his timely guidance this project might not have seen the light of day. *GOP 11.3* 

Merlin D. Burt, Michael Campbell, Jiri Moskala, and E. Edward Zinke played an integral part in envisioning the symposium that gave birth to this book project. Their support along the way helped to make *The Gift of Prophecy in Scripture and History* possible. Several people—Burt and Moskala included—willingly gave of their time to serve on the reading committee for this book, some doing so while also contributing chapters. We are especially indebted to Willie E. Hucks II and E. Edward Zinke for their timely insight and critical feedback during the manuscript review process. Besides offering valuable suggestions to the content of several chapters, James R. Nix facilitated financial and administrative support for the project through the Ellen G. White Estate. *GOP 11.4* 

With Gratitude, Alberto R. Timm and Dwain N. Esmond, Editors

# Part I—Biblical Studies

# Chapter 1 - The Prophetic Voice in the Old Testament: An Overview

Jiří Moskala

The phenomenon of prophecy in the Old Testament appears after the Fall (Gen. 3:1-6), when human beings lost face-to-face relationship with God, and it began with God's pronouncement of the proto-gospel, or "First Gospel" (verse 15). 1See Afolarin O. Ojewole, The Seed in Genesis 3:15: An Exegetical and Intertextual Study (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Adventist Theological Society, 2002). This astounding proclamation of God's determination to send the Seed and defeat the serpent (Satan) in order to secure humanity's redemption is the foundation and key for the recognition of the prophetic voice in the Old Testament. This divine statement makes a difference for the whole history of humanity— their salvation and the defeat of evil—and is expressed in the context of the great controversy when God stated: "I will put enmity" <sup>2Biblical</sup> quotations are from the New International Version unless otherwise noted. between the forces of good and evil. This soteriological announcement is a divine order of future events focused on God's activity and the fulfillment of His promise. GOP 13.1

God is the only source of the gift of prophecy, and it is not an invention by godly people. Prophets could not initiate this process, but were led by the Spirit of God in order to prophesy (1 Pet. 1:19-21). Revelation and inspiration comes to the prophets by the Lord through the work of the Holy Spirit, and this is why their words were considered to be of divine origin (Num. 24:1, 2, 13; 2 Sam. 23:2; Neh. 9:30; Eze. 11:24; Mic. 3:8; Zech. 7:12). God communicates His message by using various means to reveal His truth, such as dreams, visions, or dialogues (Gen. 15:12, 13; Dan. 2:19; 7:1, 2; Hab. 1:2-2:2; Heb. 1:1, 2). Simply stated, true prophecy is the "human transmission of . . . divine messages." 3Martti Nissinen, Prophets and Prophecy in the Ancient Near East (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 1. GOP 1.3 2

It is interesting to observe that Old Testament prophets play a dominant role in Old Testament history, 4There is vast literature on the Hebrew prophets. A representative sample follows: Walter Brueggemann, The Practice of Prophetic Imagination: Preaching an Emancipating Word (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012); Robert B. Chisholm, Jr., Handbook on the Prophets (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002): John Eaton, Mysterious Messengers: A Course on Hebrew Prophecy From Amos Onwards (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997); Donald E. Gowan, Theology of the Prophetic Books: The Death and Resurrection of Israel (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998); Wayne Grudem, The Gift of Prophecy in the New Testament and Today, rev. ed. (Wheaton, III.: Crossway Books, 2000); J. Daniel Hays, The Message of the Prophets: A Survey of the Prophetic and Apocalyptic Books of the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010); Jack R. Lundbom, The Hebrew Prophets: An Introduction (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010); Samuel A. Meier, Themes and Transformations in Old Testament Prophecy (Downers Grove, III: IVP Academic, 2009); David L. Petersen. The Prophetic Literature: An Introduction (Louisville. Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002); Paul L. Redditt, Introduction to the Prophets (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008); George E. Rice, "Spiritual Gifts," in Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology, ed. Raoul Dederen (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald® Pub. Assn., 2000), 610-650; Palmer O. Robertson, The Christ of the Prophets (Philadelphia: P&R Publishing, 2004); Alexander Rofe, The Prophetical Stories: The Narratives About the Prophets in the Hebrew Bible, Their Literary Types, and History (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1988); H. H. Rowley, "The Nature of Prophecy in the Light of Recent Study," Harvard Theological Review 38 (1945): 1-38; D. Brent Sandy, Plowshares and Pruning Hooks: Rethinking the Language of Biblical Prophecy and Apocalyptic (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2002); Christopher R. Seitz, Prophecy and Hermeneutics: Toward a New Introduction to the Prophets (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007); Gary V. Smith, Interpreting the Prophetic Books: An Exegetical Handbook (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2014); Marvin A. Sweeney, The Prophetic Literature: Interpreting Biblical Texts (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005); Willem A. VanGemeren, Interpreting the Prophetic Word: An Introduction to the Prophetic Literature of the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990); Michael J. Williams, The Prophet and His Message: Reading Old Testament Prophecy Today (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P&R Publishers, 2003) and their books "take up as much space in the Bible as the entire New Testament." 5Hays, 22. Martti Nissinen explains: "The huge process of collecting, editing, and interpreting prophecy that took place as a part of the formation of the Hebrew Bible was virtually without precedent in the rest of the

ancient Near East." <sup>6Nissinen, 5.</sup> This is why John Oswalt concludes that "the biblical books of prophecy are *sui generis*, one of a kind." <sup>7John N.</sup> Oswalt, "Is There Anything Unique in the Israelite Prophets?" <sup>Bibliotheca Sacra 172</sup> (January-March 2015): <sup>72.</sup> Their role is well summarized by the inspired historian in the following way: "The Lord warned Israel and Judah through all his prophets and seers: 'Turn from your evil ways. Observe my commands and decrees, in accordance with the entire Law that I commanded your ancestors to obey and that I delivered to you through my servants the prophets'" (2 Kings 17:13).GOP 13.3

Kenton Sparks states that "apart from the Hebrew Bible, prophecies from the ancient Near East are few." 8Kenton Sparks, Ancient Texts for the Study of the Hebrew Bible: A Guide to the Background Literature (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2005), 224. Historical records reveal that they were transmitted by divination or consulting omens, and usually uttered in a trance. In Egypt, "prophets" were employed as priests, using different magical practices to provide the pharaohs with information. In the Greek world mantic puzzling utterances had to be interpreted by someone else. In Mesopotamia the prophets were more political figures in the service of the king, thus securing the royal institution. 9This article does not deal with the phenomenon of prophecy outside of Israel. For the prophecies in the ancient Near East and their evaluations, see Redditt, 1-4; Nissinen, with contributions by C. L. Seow and Robert K. Ritnes, Prophets and Prophecy in the Ancient Near East; G. V. Smith, "Prophet; Prophecy," in The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, gen. ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 3:989-992. GOP 14 1

On the other hand, prophets in Israel had different roles. They were servants of God (*Amos 3:7*) with their ministry built on the revealed Word of God (Amos speaks about sod, namely, "secrets," "counsel," or "confidential things" exposed by God) and announced with an authority that came from God. Thus, they were not possessed by God but inspired by Him (*2 Tim. 3:16, 17*) and proclaimed God's Word to people, at times rebuking even kings and priests (*1 Sam. 3:15-18*; *13:10-14*; *2 Sam. 12:1-14*). They struggled with false prophets (e.g., see *Jer. 28:10-17*; *Eze. 13:1-23*), but their unique role was to call people to repentance and to renew a close relationship with their living Lord (*Eze. 18:30-32*; *Joel 2:12, 13*;

Amos 5:4, 6, 14, 15). John Oswalt underlines the uniqueness of God's prophets in delivering their message: "There is no record of a Hebrew prophet's message requiring confirmation through divination." 10Oswalt, 70. GOP 15.1

The phenomenon of prophecy cannot be separated from the prophetic role and function. It is indispensable to see both issues together, because the prophetic gift does not come in a vacuum and is always carried by people (with the exception of Balaam's donkey—see *Num.* 22:21-33). Being and function cannot be dissected and separated; they belong together. GOP 15.2

### **Categorization of Prophets**

The first individual explicitly mentioned as being a prophet in the Hebrew Bible is Abraham (called in Hebrew nabi'), and his role was to pray for Abimelech (*Gen. 20:7*). However, Enoch is the actual first prophet (except for God, who made the first soteriological prediction of *Genesis 3:15*), according to Jude 14, even though he is not called a prophet in the Old Testament: "Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about them: 'See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones to judge everyone." "*GOP 15.3*"

In addition to this statement, Enoch named his son Methuselah, which is an unusual name and may have prophetic connotations. There are different possibilities of expressing its meaning, such as "he will send a man," "at his death He will send," "at his death it will be sent," or "man's arrow." Alfred Jones translates it very pointedly: "When he is dead it shall be sent." 11Dictionary of Old Testament Proper Names (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1990), 249. See also Jan Heller, Výkladový slovník biblických jmen (Praha: Centrum biblických studií, 2003), 304. It is interesting that Methuselah lived 969 years; and on this basis, consider the following: Methuselah was 187 when Lamech was born; Lamech was 182 when he had Noah; and Noah was 600 years old when the Flood came. When the fathers' ages at the birth of their sons are all added together, the result is astounding (187 + 182 + 600 = 969). So Methuselah died exactly in the year of the Flood, and it was predicted in his name! *GOP 15.4* 

One can state that the first biblical prophets are categorized as "honorary prophets": Noah (God communicated with him and gave specific instructions to prepare people for the Flood, even though he is not explicitly called a prophet [Gen. 6-9] but a "preacher of righteousness" [2 Peter 2:5]); Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Gen. 20:7; Ps. 105:15); Moses (Deut. 18:15, 18); Samuel (1 Sam. 3:20); and David (Acts 2:29-30). One can classify prophets in other ways: (1) nonwriting prophets, such as Enoch, Abraham, Elijah, Elisha; and (2) classical writing prophets—four major and <sup>12Major prophets:</sup> Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel; minor prophets: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. minor prophets (a total of 16). These writing prophets can

be additionally divided into the following chronological groups Before the Christian Era (B.C.E.): ninth-century prophet (Joel); eighth-century prophets (Jonah, Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah); preexilic, or seventh-century, prophets (Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah); exilic prophets (Jeremiah, Obadiah, Ezekiel, Daniel); and postexilic prophets (Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi). <sup>13The precise</sup> dating of some prophets is disputed. See "The Chronology of the Old Testament Prophets," in The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, ed. Francis D. Nichol (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald®, 1955), 4:17-24; Hays, 35<sub>GOP</sub> 15.5

Another special category of prophets are those who wrote their documents or books, but their writings were not included in the biblical canon—Jasher, Samuel, Nathan, Gad, Shemaiah, Oded, Ahijah, Jehu, and Iddo (for details, see *Joshua 10:13*; *2 Sam. 1:18*; *1 Chron. 29:29*; *2 Chron. 9:29*; *12:15*; *15:8*; *20:34*). In addition, there were also female prophets in ancient Israel: Miriam (Ex. 15:20); Deborah (*Judges 4:4*); Hulda (*2 Kings 22:14*; *2 Chron. 34:22*); and Isaiah's wife (*Isa. 8:3*). <sup>14Also</sup> in the New Testament: Anna (Luke 2:36) and Philip's four daughters (Acts 21:9). *GOP 16.1* 

# Appearance in Crises and Crucial Moments of Salvation History

One can discover a pattern in the manner and timing of when God sent prophets. Prophets were called to their ministry at critical points in salvation history and in times of deep crisis. Usually the deeper the crisis, the greater the prophet. For instance, the prophets Elijah and Elisha ministered when Baalism and religious syncretism were very popular. Other examples include the beginning of the monarchy (Nathan, Gath), before the fall of the northern kingdom (Hosea, Amos), prior to the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 587/586 B.C. (Habakkuk, Jeremiah), during the Babylonian exile (Ezekiel, Daniel), and after the return from the Babylonian exiles (Haggai, Zechariah). God was always seeking to help His people and encourage them to follow His instruction (*Isa. 1:2*, *3*, *18*, *19*; *Mic. 6:6-8*). *GOP 16.2* 

One can detect another pattern. Every time there was a crucial event in the plan of salvation or the fulfillment of a predicted prophetic period, prophets were sent by God: Noah (before the Flood with 120 years of grace, and afterward); Abraham (starting point for a new ministry to all nations); Moses (the Exodus from Egypt; the end of the 430-year stay in Egypt); Joshua (entering into the Promised Land); Samuel (beginning of the monarchy); Hosea and Amos (serving before the fall of the northern kingdom and Samaria in 722 B.C.); Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel (working before and during the Babylonian captivity); John the Baptist (ministering before the first coming of Jesus); and Stephen (witnessing in relation to the end of the 70-weeks prophecy of Daniel 9:24-27). 15Following this pattern related to the prophetic key events, it is no wonder that Ellen G. White was called to the prophetic ministry when the longest biblical prophecy of Daniel 8:14 concerning the period of 2300 evenings and mornings was fulfilled in harmony with the plan of salvation and the book of Daniel. GOP 16.3

Who Is an Old Testament Prophet? <sup>16</sup>For details on how it applies to the life and ministry of Ellen G. White, see my article "The Phenomenon of Prophecy and Role of Prophets in the Old Testament Compared With the Ministry of Ellen G. White," in Ellen White Current Issues Symposium 7 (2011): 6-38. It presents a comprehensive picture of a prophet and his/her functions that are briefly compared with the ministry of Ellen G. White, whom we as a Seventh-day Adventist Church consider to be a prophet. See also Seventh-day Adventist fundamental belief 18 in Seventh-day Adventists Believe: An Exposition of the Fundamental Beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, 2nd ed. (Boise, Idaho: Pacific Press®, 2005), 247-261.

The gift of prophecy is recognizable in its various forms in the ministry of the Old Testament prophets by revealing who is a prophet, detecting what is his or her role, and defining the nature of the prophetic phenomenon. *GOP 17.1* 

#### 1. A Prophet Is Someone Who Is Called By God.

A prophet is a person who was called by God Himself to the prophetical ministry. Priesthood and kingship were hereditary, but one needed to be called by God in order to become a prophet. This is a specific feature of prophets and is different from kings, priests, or wise men. There are many narratives describing dramatic calls of prophets (see, e.g., the Lord's calling of Moses [Ex. 3], Samuel [1 Sam. 3], Isaiah [Isa. 6], Jeremiah [Jer. 1], and Ezekiel [Eze. 1-3]. These calls confer authority on the prophet, and it is a distinct mark for becoming a prophet. GOP 17.2

#### 2. A Prophet Is the Spokesperson for God.

Prophets are spokespersons for God. Their crucial role is to deliver speeches on God's behalf. It is clearly explained in Exodus 4 and 7 that Moses would act like God ('elohim') to Pharaoh, and Aaron would be Moses's prophet (nabi), which means that Aaron's task would be to speak to Pharaoh what Moses tells him. Aaron would be the intermediator and deliverer of God's word. So God calls prophets in order to deliver His words: "Then the Lord said to Moses, 'See, I have made you like God to Pharaoh, and your

brother Aaron will be your prophet. You are to say everything I command you, and your brother Aaron is to tell Pharaoh to let the Israelites go out of his country' " (*Ex. 7:1, 2*). "You shall speak to him and put words in his mouth; I will help both of you speak and will teach you what to do. He will speak to the people for you, and it will be as if he were your mouth and as if you were God to him" (*Ex. 4:15, 16*).*GOP 17.3* 

A prophet is thus God's "mouth," His speaker (Jer. 15:19). A prophet is an authorized and authoritative spokesperson called by God Himself. He is a nābî' (occurring 309 times in the Hebrew Bible), which means a prophet. Scholars have not reached a consensus about the meaning of this term. There are two interpretative possibilities: 1. The word is derived from the Akkadian term *nabu* (this language predates Hebrew), meaning "to be called," "one who is called," or *nabitu*, signifying "one called (by the gods)," thus nabi would mean "someone called to a certain task." 17Petersen, 6; Lundbom, 9. 2. The noun nabi is derived from the Hebrew verb naba, which root means to "speak," "prophesy." Westermann claims that the prophetical formula "Thus says the messengers. 18Claus Lord" reflects the style of Mari kings' Westermann, Basic Forms of Prophetic Speech (Philadelphia: Westminster, <sup>1967), 98-128.</sup> Thus, prophets speak for God. These two meanings should be taken as complementary, so a prophet is a person called by God and authorized by Him to be His spokesperson who communicates the content of God's revelation. The result is that "God spoke to Israel through prophets." 19Petersen, 2. GOP 17.4

Abraham Heschel aptly corrects a misunderstanding of the commonly accepted view that the prophet is God's "mouth": "The prophet is not a mouthpiece, but a person; not an instrument, but a partner, an associate of God." <sup>20Abraham J. Heschel, The Prophets: An Introduction, vol. 1 (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), 25. A prophet is not a spectator, but an actor on the stage of life; he is personally involved, immersed, and engaged in his, i.e., God's mission. Prophets play out their message as actors, as in the cases of Hosea (Hos. 1; 2), Isaiah (Isa. 20:2-4), Micah (Mic. 1:8), or Ezekiel, who performed 12 symbolic actions (Eze. 3:26, 27; 4:1-3; 4:4, 5; 4:6-8; 4:9-17; 5:1-4; 12:1-6; 12:17-20; 21:6, 7; 21:18-23; 24:15-26;</sup>

Numbers 12:6-8 plainly explains the authority of a prophet in comparison to the ministry of Moses. God Himself speaks: "When there is a prophet among you, I, the Lord, reveal myself to them in visions. I speak to them in dreams. But this is not true of my servant Moses; he is faithful in all my house. With him I speak face to face. clearly and not in riddles; he sees the form of the Lord. Why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?" Moses is a prophet par excellence and becomes a norm for all later prophets. "All prophetic utterances were to be tested by God's revelation to Moses." <sup>21VanGemeren, 38.</sup> He was uplifted to this level as a prophet because (1) God communicated with him very closely like with a friend (Ex. 33:11; Deut. 34:10); (2) he was His faithful servant and called the servant of the Lord (Ex. 14:31; Num. 12:7, 8; Deut. 34:5; Josh. 1:1, 2; compare with Heb. 3:2, 5); (3) he performed mighty deeds and miraculous signs and wonders (Deut. 34:11, 12); (4) he was a mediator of the covenant at Sinai (Ex. 19:3-8; 20:18-20; 24:3-8); (5) he developed the Old Testament church more fully after the Exodus, with Israel becoming one nation; and (6) he had several important roles assigned by God-leadership with speaking and writing. For these reasons all future prophets were to be compared to him. His ministry was normative, and people were to look forward to the "prophet like Moses." Deuteronomy 18:15 alludes to this messianic hope: "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your fellow Israelites. You must listen to him."GOP 18.2

Also Samuel and Elijah were considered as prophets with special stature (*Jer.* 15:1; 2 Chron. 35:18; Mal. 4:5), even though they did not write a book. They were the model prophets and fulfilled their roles without any faults in times of extraordinary crisis. Samuel stood for a theocracy and encouraged the first two kings of Israel to do the will of God. Elijah's faithfulness on Mount Carmel when he opposed 850 Baal and Asherah prophets in false worship and courageously called the whole nation to serve the Lord was magnificent and spectacular (see 1 Kings 18:16-46). <sup>22Willem</sup> VanGemeren underlines the special place of Moses, Samuel, and Elijah in the development of prophetism in Israel. He claims that Moses occupies a unique fountainhead position as the servant of the Lord and mediator-intercessor of the

covenant, Samuel plays the prophetic role model as the guardian of the theocracy, and Elijah is the covenant prosecutor as he fought for the Lord at Mount Carmel. See VanGemeren, 27-39. GOP 18.3

A prophet is a voice (gol) in the wilderness (Isa. 40:3; Mark 1:3); he is God's messenger, mal'ak (see Mal. 3:1, Matt. 3:1-4, see also Mal. 2:7). Gary V. Smith expresses it well: "The written records of the prophets portray them as normal people, preaching to diverse audiences in a wide array of settings. Each fulfilled God's calling by communicating a life-transforming message that required a reevaluation of the way their audiences conceived the phenomena in the world. . . . They saw themselves as messengers who communicated God's word to an audience that needed God's love. wisdom, power, and grace." <sup>23</sup>Gary V. Smith, An Introduction to the Hebrew Prophets: The Prophets as Preachers (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1994), 339. Abraham Heschel explains: "The prophet claims to be far more than a messenger. He is a person who stands in the presence of God (Jer. 15:19), who stands 'in the council of the Lord' (Jer. 23:18), who is a participant, as it were, in the council of God, not a bearer of dispatches whose function is limited to being sent on errands. He is a counselor as well as messenger." <sup>24Heschel, 21.</sup> Grudem correctly writes: "The main function of the Old Testament prophets was to be messengers from God, sent to speak to men and women with words from God." 25Grudem, 21.GOP 19.1

### 3. A Prophet Is the Proclaimer of the Divine Word.

Prophets very often used specific formulas: "This is what the Lord says" (*Isa.* 45:1; 49:8; *Jer.* 18:13; 29:10); "The Lord said to me" (*Isa.* 8:1; *Hos.* 3:1); "The Lord spoke to . . . me" (*Isa.* 8:11, NKJV); "This is what the Sovereign Lord says" (*Eze.* 6:11; 7:5; *Oba.* 1); "The word of the Lord came to me" (*Jer.* 1:4, 13; 2:1; *Eze.* 6:1); "Declares the Lord" (*Jer.* 3:20; 4:1; 8:1; *Hag.* 1:13); "The word of the Lord came to [follows a name of a particular prophet]" (1 Kings 16:1; Hos. 1:1; Joel 1:1; Jon. 1:1; Mic. 1:1; Zeph. 1:1; Zech. 1:1); "By the word of the Lord a man of God came" (1 Kings 13:1); etc. Prophets proclaim the word of God, because God revealed it to them (*Amos* 7:15, 16). This fact of God's revealeding gives to them the highest

authority 26Faithful Hebrew prophets do not use divination or magic, but stay in total opposition to it (see Ex. 8:18, 19; Num. 23:23; Eze. 13:1-23). For the manipulative practice of false prophets, see VanGemeren, 21-23. The secrets (sod) of God are revealed to them (Amos 3:7; Gen. 18:17); they saw God and had a personal encounter with Him (1 Kings 17:2: 18:15; Isa. 6:1-9; Jer. 1:4-10; Eze. 1:28; Dan. 7:9, 10, 13, 14; Amos 9:1). They are His speakers; they speak in God's name to His people and sometimes even to other nations (see prophets' oracles against foreign nations in Isaiah 13-23; Jeremiah 46-51; Ezekiel 25-32: Amos 1: 2: or Jonah's mission to the Ninevites—Jonah 4: see also Seraiah's journey to Babylon with the message from Jeremiah in Jeremiah 51:59-64). They were ministers of God's word. 27The words of a prophet can be accompanied with dramatic action (2 Kings 13:15-17; Eze. 4:1-5:4), even though they are sufficient (Isa. 55:10, 11; Jer. 23:29). Sometimes music was also present (see 1 Sam. 10:5, 6, 10; 2 Kings 3:15), GOP 192

Through prophets the invisible God becomes audible. Prophets make God's presence more real; they declare that they were in God's presence. Samuel Meier states that "only the prophet ever made the claim that he stood in the presence of God." <sup>28Meier, 19</sup> Abraham Heschel observes that the prophet's task was to bring people to the presence of God. They "could not use the language of essence; they had to use the language of presence. They did not try to depict Him; they tried to present Him, to make Him present. In such effort, only words of grandeur and intensity, not abstractions, can be of any avail." <sup>29Abraham J. Heschel, The Prophets, vol. 2 (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), 55. GOP 20.1</sup>

The authority of a prophet is derived from God, His revelation, and His word. Prophetic office is not bought or inherited but given from above. If a prophet is called by God, he or she has the authority—as Moses did—and speaks the very word of God that needs to be obeyed. When a prophet speaks, it is like God would speak, because the prophet delivers His Word and not his or her own (see 2 Pet. 1:19-21). Deuteronomy 18:17-19 gives reasons a prophet has authority and must be highly respected: "The Lord said to me: 'What they say is good. I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their fellow Israelites, and I will put my words in his

mouth. He will tell them everything I command him. I myself will call to account anyone who does not listen to my words that the prophet speaks in my name.' "Grudem correctly states that the words of a prophet have the highest authority: "We could fully trust the words of the Old Testament Scriptures, and (whenever its commands apply to us today) we should fully obey its commands, for they are commands from God." 30Grudem, 26.GOP 20.2

The proclamation of God's word is very crucial because it provides a control to the prophetic gift. The orthodoxy and genuineness of the prophet can be established and confirmed by examining his word (*Isa. 8:19, 20*). It gives balance to the spiritual and visionary part of the prophet, because anybody can claim that God revealed Himself to him/her or that God spoke to him/her. The prophet's word is something tangible that can be evaluated and judged if it is in harmony with the directions of God's previous revelation, or if it is in contradiction to its original intent and purpose. *GOP 20.3* 

The needed truthfulness of the prophet's message and credibility is described in *Deuteronomy 13:1-4*: "If a prophet, or one who foretells by dreams, appears among you and announces to you a sign or wonder, and if the sign or wonder spoken of takes place, and the prophet says, 'Let us follow other gods' (gods you have not known) 'and let us worship them,' you must not listen to the words of that prophet or dreamer. The Lord your God is testing you to find out whether you love him with all your heart and with all your soul. It is the Lord your God you must follow, and him you must revere. Keep his commands and obey him; serve him and hold fast to him." *GOP 20.4* 

It is important to realize that even false prophets can perform miracles, and prophets with wonders can mislead. Mighty deeds and miracles are not proof of the trustworthiness and authenticity of the prophecy or the prophet's teaching. "One impossibility for a true biblical prophet, therefore, is that he would proclaim any message that promotes other gods and their worship." <sup>31Williams, 16.</sup> GOP 20.5

"The signs or wonders the prophet performs are of secondary importance to the message they accompany." <sup>32lbid., 17.</sup> "A person

is not necessarily a prophet because he is able to announce a sign or wonder that comes to pass. If the message that person speaks calls people to faithful obedience to the God of the Scriptures, only then should the sign or wonder be acknowledged as legitimate." 33lbid., 18. GOP 21.1

The principle is thus clear: the prophetical message must be in harmony with God's previous revelation and His law, and the new message cannot contradict basic principles of what other prophets have taught. Not the gift of the Spirit but only the fruit of the Spirit are genuine signs of truth: "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!' " (Matt. 7:21-23).GOP 21.2

Grudem argues that in the Old Testament "every prophet is judged or evaluated, but not the various parts of every prophecy." 34Grudem, <sup>24.</sup> It means that "when a prophet spoke in the name of the Lord, if even one prophecy did not come true, he was a false prophet (Deut. 18:22)," 35lbid., 24. For the issue of conditionality of prophecy, see the section below titled "Conditionality of the Prophetic Voice." Samuel was evaluated as a person and his message in its entirety (see 1 Sam. 3:19; 9:6; also Jer. 28:8, 9) and prevailed (1 Sam. 2:30). Biblical prophets are always very closely associated with the law of God. The law (Hebrew Torah, teaching, God's instructions) is inseparable from their activities. All that the prophets were doing was deeply rooted in the Torah. They were called and obliged to transmit God's word to the people. They pointed back to the law of God. Thus, the Pentateuch is the foundation in which prophets were ingrained and to which they referred. 36For a discussion on the relationship between the Prophets and the Torah, see Seitz, 55-73; Rolf Rendtorff, Canon and Theology (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 55-65; Gerhard von Rad, Old Testament Theology, vol. 2 (New York: SCM, 1968), 2, 3. GOP 21 3

God's transcendence prevented prophets from manipulating God or altering His message. A warning example is the prophet Balaam,

who could only utter genuine prophecies (*Num.* 22:35, 38; 23:11, 12, 25, 26; 24:12-13) in spite of his attempts to do otherwise (*Num.* 24:1, 2). He pronounced the most beautiful blessings on God's people (*Num.* 23:18-24; 24:9) and proclaimed messianic prophecies (*Num.* 24:17-19). However, he departed from his call, gave wicked advice, and his life ended in a violent death (*Num.* 25:1, 2; 31:8, 16; *Josh.* 13:22; cf. 2 *Pet.* 2:15; *Rev.* 2:14).*GOP* 21.4

It is interesting that God could give even prophetic dreams to Pharaoh (*Gen. 41:1-40*) or Ne-buchadnezzar (see *Dan. 2* and *4*), but always the correct interpretation needed to be delivered by God's men (e.g., Joseph or Daniel) so that the divine message would not be mixed and confused with magic or divination. The word and content of God's message is more crucial than the manner of deliverance. Also the unusual symbols in apocalyptic visions of the prophetic books of Ezekiel, Daniel, and Zechariah demand thorough cognitive work for understanding of the meaning of the Old Testament message. *GOP 21.5* 

#### 4. A Prophet Is the Presenter of the Right Picture of God.

The principal task and the main role of God's prophets was to present a right picture of God. Prophets paint the picture of God on the background of the great controversy between good and evil. Not a sentimental dream picture about God, not a distant God, not a cruel, tyrannical or capricious God, not a God of philosophers (an idealistic, motionless, non-historical God), but a living, interacting, emotional, suffering, intervening God. Satan tried from the very beginning in the Garden of Eden to distort the character of God, making of Him a monster (Gen. 3:1-5). 37See my article "The Nature and Definition of Sin: A Practical Study of Genesis 3:1-6," in The Word of God for the People of God: A Tribute to the Ministry of Jack J. Blanco, ed. Ron du Preez, Philip Samaan, and Ron Clouzet (Collegedale, Tenn.: School of Religion, Southern Adventist University, 2004), 289-306. The main role of prophets was to restore the true understanding of God, because from the lack of knowledge people perish (Hos. 4:1, 6; 5:1). Oswalt aptly summarizes that prophets "understanding of God and of humanity and of the world and of the meaning and purpose of human experience, and indeed of reality, is unique." 380swalt, 84. GOP 22.1

Prophets were correctors of the wrong picture of God. They presented the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, God of prophets, God of love, truth, justice, and freedom (*Gen. 3:1-15*; *Ex. 34:6*, 7). Only this correct view of God stirs a right response (*Rom. 2:4*). God is presented already in Genesis as God the Creator, Judge, Savior, Leader, Help, Lord of History, Covenant God, and personal God. Prophets spoke about hope and restoration. <sup>39For a summary of the Old</sup> Testament prophetic message as well as for 10 basic characteristics of God's revelation to His people, see my article "The Message of God's People in the Old Testament," Journal of the Adventist Theological Society 19 (2008): 18-39. *GOP* 

Some prophets performed great miracles—especially Moses, Elijah. and Elisha, 40Elijah's and Elisha's ministries are at the center of 1-2 Kings, from 1 Kings 17 to 2 Kings 8. The mighty works they accomplished were by God's grace and command and were not their inventions or a sign of their presumptuous or arrogant behavior. Prophet Elijah confesses that what he did on Mount Carmel was done in accordance with God's will and instructions: "I am your servant and have done all these things at your command" (1 Kings 18:36). but others not. However, the most important point for all prophets was to deliver the divine message faithfully. Prophetic message was twofold—proclaiming judgment or condemnation, but on the other hand, also hope, restoration, and salvation. 41Prophets are poets, as the majority of their writings were written in poetry. They communicate their messages with beauty and express their thoughts in colorful language, which can sometimes be difficult to understand. This poetic language engages the reader to use all capacities in order to understand the messages that are encapsulated in a few words and to uncover the riddles they contain. On the other hand, poetic language helped people to memorize thoughts more easily, and pointed to a God of literary beauty. God values language and teaches through prophets to use it in a precise and beautiful way. Prophetical message is strongly monotheistic and against all forms of idolatry. It is an ethical message of true morality with respect for God, other human beings, and self. They demand responsible moral behavior. Justice is another key component of their message that was often stressed and emphasized. Their principal message, however, was always one of repentance and return to the Lord (Eze. 14:6; 18:30-32; 33:11; Hos. 6:1; 14:1, 2; Joel 2:12-14; Amos 5:4-6, 14, 15). They are "guardians of theocracy" 42Edward J. Young, My Servants the

Prophets (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952), 82. who want God to rule in the lives of everyone and allow Him to be their God and Lord. GOP 22.3

Prophets specifically spoke about the Day of the Lord (for example, *Joel 1:15*; *2:1*, *11*, *31*; *3:14*; *Amos 5:18*; *Zeph. 1:14-3:1*), which was the type for the second coming of Christ. Zimmerli rightly points to the fact that on many occasions the prophetic word regarding "a day of Yahweh . . . is interpreted as a phenomenon that is relevant for the whole world." <sup>43</sup>Walther Zimmerli, The Fiery Throne: The Prophets and Old Testament Theology (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 42<sub>GOP</sub> 23.1

True prophets had to unmask the false worship system like Elijah and Daniel did (1 Kings 18:18-39, Dan. 3:1-30, 7:8, 24-27; 8:9-26) and denounce false prophets with their wrong practices (Eze. 13). It is significant to note that there is no term in the Hebrew Scriptures for false prophets. The Septuagint uses the word pseudo prophets (see Jer. 28:1 [= LXX 35:1]; Jer. 29:1, 8 = [LXX 36:1, 8]; Zech. 13:2), but in the Hebrew this terminology is missing; the word nabi is used to designate a true or a false prophet. Their belief system and praxis identify them as true or false. This is why it was quite difficult in Israel to distinguish between the true and false prophet. Abraham Heschel pointedly explains: "The God of the philosophers is a concept derived from abstract ideas; the God of the prophets is derived from acts and events." 44Abraham J. Heschel, God in Search of Man: A Philosophy of Judaism (New York: Farrar, Staraus and Giroux, 1955), <sup>213.</sup> When they practiced magic or divination (Isa. 9:19, Jer. 14:14), went after false gods and fell into idolatry (Eze. 8:6-18, 14:3-8, 20:30-44), their morality was questionable (Jer. 23:14), predicted things that did not happen (Jer. 28:2-4, 10, 11, 15-17), or misled people (Deut. 13:2; 18:20; Jer. 2:8), so they were identified as unfaithful servants. GOP 23.2

# 5. A Prophet Is the Interpreter of History.

When I ask people the question "Who is a prophet?" the typical answer is that a prophet is a person who predicts future events. This answer is partially true because prophets can predict the future, but contrary to popular opinion, predicting the future was

generally a minor role (one exception would be the apocalyptic prophet Daniel). The English term prophet is derived from the Greek noun prophetes, which basically means to foresee. However, this understanding is misleading and simplifies, because prophets only rarely predicted the future. Uttering a prophecy occupies a small portion of their role. GOP 23.3

It is interesting that the Hebrew canon places among the prophetical portion of the Old Testament books that in a Christian canon belong among historical books. The Hebrew canon consists of these three sections: (1) Pentateuch; (2) Prophets—(a) Former Prophets: Joshua, Judges, 1-2 Samuel, 1-2 Kings (in our canon they are all part of the "historical books"); and (b) Latter Prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Minor Prophets; and (3) Writings, which include wisdom literature and the rest of the historical books. *GOP 23.4* 

So, according to the Hebrew canonical division, a prophet is an interpreter of history. Prophets interpret the history from God's perspective. There is no prophecy—or real life, for that matter without memory! The primary role of the biblical prophets is not to satisfy our curiosity regarding the future. Petersen mentions that "prophets are presented as historians." 45Petersen, 2. Redditt claims that prophets "by far the majority, deal with explanations of past and present events and exhortations for the people to live righteously, priests to teach properly, and rulers and judges to administer justice fairly." <sup>46Redditt,</sup> xiii; Seitz, 248. They are rather "forthtellers" than "foretellers." Prophets interpreted past history in order to help people to understand it, and thus to do right and make mature decisions now. They call for present actions. Thus, prophets are people of three tenses: they interpret what happened in the past history, they predict the future, but urge people to act ethically in the present. GOP 24.1

# 6. A Prophet Is a Person With Special Insight.

A prophet receives insight into complex situations. This is why he or she is called *ro'eh*, or seer (used 11 times in the Hebrew Bible). The Hebrew root of this particular noun is *raah*, meaning to "see" or "perceive." Prophets perceive what other people do not see (1 Sam.

9:19; 15:28; Eze. 1:1; Amos 8:1, 2; Jer. 1:11-14; 24:3-5, 8; Zech. 4:2-6). They know God's will to the extent that He discloses it to them. He is hozeh, a vizier (employed 16 times in the Old Testament). The Hebrew root chazah means to "see," "gaze," "look intently," "have vision" (Num. 24:4; Isa. 1:1; 13:16; Amos 1:1; Oba. 1; Mic. 1:1; Hab. 1:1). This is why a prophet is a person of vision seeing life from God's angle, from His point of view.GOP 24.2

It does not mean that prophets understand everything. They also ask questions, need to search the Scriptures for answers, and sometimes must learn to live with their questions (Dan. 7:28; 8:27; 9:2, 22, 23; 12:8, 9; Hab. 1:2, 12, 13; 2:1-3; 3:2, 3, 16-19; "No prophet asks more questions than Zechariah": 47Meier, 40. 1 Peter 1:10-12). Prophets can speak about things only if God reveals them to them. For example, Elisha did not know the cause of a woman's grief (2 Kings 4:27). It is God who reveals to prophets the future (2 Kings 8:10, 13) and secret things (2 Kings 6:12). See also the experiences of Balaam, who had to deliver only the word of God to the Moabite king Balak (Num. 22:35-38; 23:11, 12, 26; 24:12, 13), and Daniel, who did not understand what God had revealed to him (Dan. 8:27; 12:8). It is interesting that all three terms for designating a prophet are used in 1 Chronicles 29:29, where Samuel is called the seer, Nathan the prophet, and Gad the vizier. In 2 Samuel 24:11 Gad is called both the prophet and the vizier, and 1 Samuel 9:9 explains that in the past a prophet was called a seer. GOP 24.3

Because prophets receive special insight from God about the future (the great controversy and details of the plan of salvation), they can predict the future, usually the near future (*Jer. 28:15-17*; *Eze. 24:15-18*; *Hab. 1:6*). Sometimes they even predict the distant future (*Isa. 24-27*; *Eze. 38*; *39*; *Dan. 2*; *7*; *8*; *9:24-27*), while false prophets are without the ability to see beyond their own time. *GOP 24.4* 

What prophets really see is the significance of what God presents and the meaning of it. They are able to distinguish the relevancy of the topic presented (*Amos 7:7, 8; 8:1, 2*). This ability to perceive implications demonstrates that they are filled with the Spirit. They can see the real point of the vision and what God intends to do. <sup>48Meier, 39, 40; Gowan, 27.</sup> God's ultimate intention is the salvation of humankind; thus a true prophet points to Christ. Isaiah speaks

about Immanuel (*Isa. 7:14*), Divine Son who will be born (*Isa. 9:6*), Davidic King (*Isa. 11:1-16*), and the Servant of the Lord (*Isa. 42:1-9*; *49:1-7*; *50:4-9*; *52:13-53:12*; *61:1-3*). Ezekiel projects five messianic predictions (*Eze. 17:22*; *21:27*; *29:21*; *34:23*; *37:24*, *25*). <sup>49Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., The Messiah in the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995) who argues for 65 direct Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament. See also Michael Rydelnik, The Messianic Hope: Is the Hebrew Bible Really Messianic? (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2010). Williams asserts: "All of the Old Testament points forward to him [Jesus Christ], and all of the New Testament reflects back on the significance of the Christ event." <sup>50Williams, 8</sup>. Also, a prophet speaks about the future kingdom of God (*Isa. 24-27*; *Dan. 2* and *7*). *GOP 25.1*</sup>

Another integral part of their messages were announcements of iudgment upon nations such as Babylon and Egypt, and Daniel even spoke about the activities of the little horn. They also preached about God's judgment on His people (Joel 3:14-16; Amos 5:18-24). A prophet is a person of three tenses—past, present, and future—which enables him or her to help people achieve a correct orientation, perspective, or knowledge, and to motivate them to make right decisions. Prophets push for actions and encourage God's people to act now. 51There is basic continuity between the Old and New Covenants. All biblical teaching is always built upon God's grace, love, and justice. For example, was Paul's teaching about justification by faith his invention? Clearly not, because he pointed to Old Testament key passages. In order to prove his argument, he uncovered what was forgotten and buried under the dust of oral tradition. Paul needed two or three witnesses from the Hebrew Scripture and presented his case with biblical evidences: (1) Torah (Gen. 15:6); (2) Prophets (Hab. 2:4); and (3) Writings (Ps. 32:1, 2). There is a theological unity between Old and New Testament teachings on this matter. Salvation was always the gift from God. From Adam on, people were justified by God's grace through faith. GOP 25.2

#### 7. A Prophet Is a Man of God.

A prophet is also called 'is 'elohim, i.e., the man of God. This expression is used 76 times in the Old Testament (1 Sam. 2:27; 9:6-10; 1 Kings 12:22; 17:24; 2 Kings 4:7, 9; 1 Chron. 23:14; 2 Chron. 8:14). 52This expression is used about Moses, Samuel, David,

Shemaiah, Elijah, Elisha, and unknown prophets. Why this designation? This phrase describes a special relationship between God and the prophet. He belongs to God, but at the same time it points to the godly life of the prophet. So this term means to be a "holy man" <sup>53Eaton, 2.</sup> and underscores the delivery of God's word by God's man. It is interesting that this phrase "is not used for any of the literary prophets." <sup>54Hays, 26.</sup> The expression "man of God" is also used for Moses (1 Chron. 23:14; Ezra 3:2) and David (Neh. 12:24, 36). GOP 25.3

#### 8. A Prophet Is a Man of the Spirit.

A prophet is also *'is haruach*, i.e., the man of the Spirit (*Hos. 9:7*). Even though in the book of Hosea this designation is used pejoratively, the fact remains that a prophet is led, filled, and endowed by the Holy Spirit. Without the Spirit they are powerless. "The Spirit of God came on" Balaam, so he could prophesy (*Num. 24:2*). The Spirit of God gives to prophets the message (*Eze. 2:1*; 3:12, 24; 2 Pet. 1:21). There is a play on the word ruach in Jeremiah 5:13, because ruach can mean "Spirit" (of God), but also "wind": "The [false] prophets are but wind and the word is not in them; so let what they say be done to them." The prophetic office is a Spirit-empowered ministry (*Judg. 3:10*; 6:34; 11:29; 13:25; 14:6, 19; 15:14, 15; 2 Sam. 23:2; Neh. 9:20, 30; Isa. 61:1; 63:14). 55For a detailed study on the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament and His seven functions, see my article: "The Holy Spirit in the Hebrew Scriptures," Journal of Adventist Theological Society 24, no. 2 (2013): 18-58. GOP 26.1

The story is told about a man who came to his dying rabbi and said: "Rabbi, God spoke to me in a dream and stated that I am to be your successor. You need to appoint me to your position before you pass away." The rabbi wisely answered: "Go home, and if you have the same dream tonight, come again to me." The next day the man returned and confirmed that he had received the same dream. The rabbi insisted that they needed to be sure about it, so he requested the man to go home and pray. If he had the same dream for the third time, then something must be done about it. When the man came the third day and affirmed that he had the same dream again, the rabbi then advised him: "Now you need to pray that the same dream will be given to each person in our community of faith! Only

then will you be my successor!"GOP 26.2

Everyone can claim that he or she has had a dream or a vision in which the Spirit of God spoke. How do we judge the authenticity of such a claim? Not by external signs, assurances of dreams and visions, or experience but in God's revelation. His Word is the ultimate proof of the genuineness of the prophet (see point 3, above), the only warrant of truth. "The true prophets of Israel, whether precanonical or canonical, possessed *both* the *word* and the *Spirit* of the Lord." <sup>56Hobert</sup> E. Freeman, An Introduction to the Old Testament Prophets (Chicago: Moody, 1968), 58. To this crucial element can be added some external physical phenomena that may accompany the vision (e.g., the prophet has open eyes while in vision [*Num.* 24:4, 16], does not breathe [*Dan.* 10:17], <sup>57Daniel</sup>, according to the Hebrew text, literally states: "As for me, no strength remains in me now, nor is any breath left in me" (NKJV). or his strength is gone [*Eze.* 2:1; *Dan.* 7:28; 8:27; 10:16, 17]). *GOP* 26.3

#### 9. A Prophet Is the Servant of the Covenant.

A prophet is the servant of the covenant. Biblical covenants reflect Hittite suzerain-vassal treaties in their form. Built on the studies of these treaties, Bible scholars recognized that biblical covenants have several parts: (1) Preamble—where the Sovereign Lord presents Himself and who He is; (2) Historical Prologue—past relationship between the Lord and His people is defined; (3) Stipulations—laws are presented that need to be observed; (4) Blessings and Curses—in this section are clearly defined the consequences of obedience and rebellion (e.g., in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 27-30); (5) Witnesses; and (6) Special Provisions or signs of the covenant. 58For details, see D. J. McCarthy, Old Testament Covenant: A Survey of Current Opinions (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1972), 10-22; Paul Lawrence, The Book of Moses Revisited (Eugene, Oreg.: Wipf & Stock. 2011): 47-64. Good examples of this arrangement of the biblical material are the Decalogue (Ex. 20:1-17); the whole book of Deuteronomy, which is structured according to the parts of the covenant 59See Edward J. Woods, Deuteronomy, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, III.: IVP Academics, 2011), 41-47. and Joshua

24, where the renewal of the covenant under the leadership of Joshua is established (divided into six parts in the following way: 24:2a; 2b-13; 14-18; 19-21; 22-24; 25-27). GOP 26.4

Oswalt aptly underlines that "the primary task of the Israelite prophet is to remind the people of their covenant relationship with Yahweh and of the obligatory behavior this should impose upon them." 60Oswalt, 75. In our present study we need to underscore covenant blessings and curses. Prophets are called to remind people of the consequences of their covenant relationship with God. Their disobedience will bring curses and disaster. 61God cannot tolerate sin, stubbornness, or indifference. As a heavenly Surgeon and Judge He has to destroy those who continue to destroy the values of life, and cut off the cancer of sin and decay from the body (Gen. 6:11-13; Rev. 11:18).

"This call to covenant obedience brings the Israelite prophet to his unique view of the openness of history: the future is not determined, but dependent on the choices of the people with respect to their covenant." 62Oswalt, 75. Grudem rightly explains that a prophet is a " 'messenger of the covenant' sent to remind Israel of the terms of her covenant with the Lord, calling the disobedient to repentance and warning that the penalties of disobedience will soon be applied." 63Grudem, 22. Prophets used the strong language of the covenant curses in order to steer the people toward a proper response to God! They reminded the people of God's faithfulness. their disobedience, and His impending punishment—"covenant lawsuit" (rib). 64For a detailed study, see Geofrey W. Ramsey, "Speech Forms in Hebrew Law and Prophetic Oracles," Journal of Biblical Literature 96 (1977): 45-58; Smith, Interpreting the Prophetic Books, 31-33. They called people to be partakers of the new covenant with God. Thus, they are covenant spokespersons. GOP 27.2

# 10. A Prophet Is the Mediator and Intercessor.

The first explicit occurrence of the word nabi in the Bible is associated with intercessory ministry. God assures Abimelech that he will live when Abraham, the prophet, prays for him (*Gen. 20:7*, 17). Prophets are standing between God and His people communicating from each party to the other. Moses prayed for

Pharaoh (*Ex. 8:8*, *12*, *28-30*; *9:28-33*; *10:16-18*). A prophet is a man of prayer (*Isa. 37:1-4*; *Jer. 10:23-25*). Also Samuel was instrumental in preserving God's people (*Jer. 15:1*; *Hos. 12:13*). Samuel modeled himself after Moses' great example of intercession (*Ex.32:30*, *31*). Prophets prayed for and with people. Daniel prayed with his three friends (*Dan. 2:20-23*) and for the whole nation (*Dan. 9:4-19*), Abraham prayed for Abimelech (*Gen. 20:17*, *18*), and Moses prayed for sinners (*Ex. 32:31*, *32*). Elijah invited and appealed to the whole nation to serve the Lord and not Baal. He then prayed to God, and God responded in a very spectacular and tangible way (*1 Kings 18*). Prophets not only prayed for sinners but even symbolically bore their sins (*Eze. 4:4-6*). This was their priestly role. It is also interesting to observe that at least three prophets were from the priestly family: Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Zechariah. They approached God on behalf of people. *GOP 27.3* 

#### 11. A Prophet Is a Revivalist and Reformer.

Prophets call for a true, meaningful relationship with God without formalism. They call for repentance (*Eze. 18:31*; *33:11*; three times Amos 5 uses the expression "Seek the Lord and live") and denounce all kind of sins, e.g., idolatry, pride, selfishness, infidelity, murder, exploitation, abuse, injustice, and unfaithfulness (*Eze. 20*; 22). Prophets call for a relationship with God built on love and gratitude (*Isa. 58:13*, *14*; *Eze. 36:24-28*; *Mic. 7:15-20*; *Zeph. 3:14-20*). They disturb people and are against stagnation, spiritual lethargy, comforts of life, laziness, and status quo. Prophets help people to cultivate honest relationships with God: "He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God" (*Mic. 6:8*).*GOP 28.1* 

Prophets' social work is extensive. <sup>65</sup>See Victor H. Matthews, Social World of the Hebrew Prophets (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2001). They call everyone in society to repentance, to be faithful to God and His covenant—kings, priests, judges, false prophets, rich people, officials, military leaders, common people, women, children (see, e.g., *Joel 2:12-19*; *Eze. 14:6*; *33:11*, *12*). They are social reformers and call for special care for poor, orphans, widows, and aliens (*Deut. 14:29*; *Isa. 9:17*; *10:2*). They are strongly against any form of

pride, corruption, injustice, violence, abuse, immorality, and deceit. Jesus summarizes this emphasis on simple social issues for all in His parable about the Last Judgment. Jesus, the Prophet of all prophets, mentions the same six social actions four times and always in the same order: GOP 28.2

Then the King will say to those on his right, "Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me." Then the righteous will answer him, "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?" The King will reply, "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me" (*Matt. 25:34-40*). GOP 28.3

Reinhold Niebuhr declared that a true prophet's messages in a wicked time might cause insecurity. <sup>66See</sup> Reinhold Niebuhr, "The Test of True Prophecy," in his Beyond Tragedy: Essays on the Christian Interpretation of History (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1937), 93-110. Needed changes create a sense of uneasiness and should lead to reformation. God will not destroy His people, even though the message of judgment and condemnation is strong. The Day of the Lord will come (Zeph. 1:14), but God has no delight in death of the wicked, but wants their repentance (Eze. 18:31). Death is for God a contradiction, because He is the Source and Giver of life, the Creator. Punishment and destruction is not His nature, but a strange and alien work that needs to be done for the sake of removing evil and protecting life (Isa. 28:21).GOP 29.1

Prophets deepened the deceitfulness, danger, and consciousness of sin by revealing God's holiness, righteousness, and purity, and they consistently call people to repentance. *GOP* 29.2

# 12. A Prophet Is a Teacher of Righteousness.

Prophets taught people about true worship (*Amos 5:21-24*). A classic example is the prophet Elijah (*1 Kings 18*), but many others did the same (*Jer. 1:3*; *Mal. 3:7*). Isaiah protested against corrupted worship (*Isa. 1:10-20*); Zephaniah called Israel to the service of true singing (*Zeph. 3:14, 15*); and Micah stood against a lifestyle that would be centered on rituals instead of true morality and ethics (*Mic. 6:6-8*). They taught the meaning of true fasting (*Isa. 58:6-14*), keeping of the Sabbath (*Isa. 56:3-8; 58:12-14; Eze. 20:12-20*), true ethics of love and justice (*Zech. 7; 8*), and many other important subjects (*Mal. 2:10-16; 3:8-12*). <sup>67Prophets'</sup> use of music is an overlooked topic of study. Consider the following relevant passages: Ex. 15:1-18, 20, 21; Deut. 32:1-43; Judg. 5:1; 1 Sam 10:5, 6; 2 Sam. 23:12; 2 Kings 3:15, 16; 1 Chron. 25:1-3; 2 Chron. 29:25, 30; 35:15; Isa. 5:1; Eze. 33:32). GOP 29.3

Rolf Rendtorff underlines that prophecy should not be detached from the Torah, <sup>68Rendtorff, 57-65.</sup> because a prophet must be the guardian of the law of God (*Isa. 8:20*). Prophets teach people what is right and just, present the truth of God, and teach God's instructions (Torah). This teaching role summarizes many other aspects of their ministry. The teaching aspect was formalized under the prophet Samuel, who founded prophetic schools that prospered well into the time of Elijah and Elisha. <sup>69William F. Albright, Samuel and the Beginning of the Prophetic Movement, Goldenson Lectures (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1961). *GOP 29.4*</sup>

Prophets also have many other functions. They play a role of a pastor/comforter, like Ezekiel in Babylonian exile after Jerusalem's fall in 587/586 B.C., when he brought hope to the exiles (see *Eze. 36*; 37). They encouraged God's people, like Isaiah (*Isa. 40:1*, 2), Zephaniah (*Zeph. 2:3*; 3:11-17), or Habakkuk (*Hab. 3:13-19*). A prophet can be an evangelist or missionary, like the prophet Jonah, who was sent by God to preach to the Ninevites (*Jon. 1-4*).GOP 29.5

# **Conditionality of the Prophetic Voice**

Not all biblical prophecies are conditional. How can one know that prophecy speaks about a possible future or a determined future? Is there a difference between classical and apocalyptic prophecies? What are the principles behind the conditionality of prophecy? I will suggest four principles that will attest to the conditionality of different prophecies. GOP 30.1

## The First Principle

A prophecy or biblical statement is conditional when it contains an "if" or "when" formula: "if you will listen, you will prosper, but if you will not, this will happen to you" (e.g., Lev. 26 and Deut. 28-30).GOP 30.2

## The Second Principle

Every time a human response to the prophecy or prophetic message is anticipated, this prophecy is conditional! God sends a message with a specific purpose in mind, namely, to call people back to Himself (*Joel 2:12-15*). God does not want people to die as well-informed sinners. *GOP 30.3* 

A. This is proved by Jonah's "unconditional" sentence: "On the first day, Jonah started into the city. He proclaimed: 'Forty more days and Nineveh will be overthrown' "(Jonah 3:4). This prophecy was conditional even though there was no "if" or "when" formula, and the sentence sounded perfectly clear. But it was conditional because a human response was anticipated, and the Ninivetes responded to God's call positively, so they were not destroyed. The very fact that Jonah was sent to them by God was already an act of His grace. GOP 30.4

This is in a perfect harmony with God's explanation: GOP 30.5

If at any time I declare concerning a nation or a kingdom, that I will pluck up and break down and destroy it, and if that nation, concerning which I have spoken, turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I intended to do to it. And if at any time I declare

concerning a nation or a kingdom that I will build and plant it, and if it does evil in my sight, not listening to my voice, then I will relent of the good that I had intended to do to it (*Jer. 18:7-10*, ESV).*GOP* 30.6

God's word is sent to accomplish its mission: "So is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it" (Isa. 55:11). " 'Is not my word like fire,' declares the Lord, 'and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?' " (Jer. 23:29). B. Hezekiah's illness: No condition was stated, yet it was conditional, as we learn from the context. "In those days Hezekiah became ill and was at the point of death. The prophet Isaiah son of Amoz went to him and said, 'This is what the Lord says: Put your house in order, because you are going to die; you will not recover' " (2 Kings 20:1). This was an uncompromising straight statement, and Hezekiah sincerely prayed: "Remember, Lord, how I have walked before you faithfully and with wholehearted devotion and have done what is good in your eyes.' And Hezekiah wept bitterly" (verses 2, 3). God graciously reacted: GOP 30.7

Before Isaiah had left the middle court, the word of the Lord came to him: "Go back and tell Hezekiah, the ruler of my people, 'This is what the Lord, the God of your father David, says: I have heard your prayer and seen your tears; I will heal you. On the third day from now you will go up to the temple of the Lord. I will add fifteen years to your life. And I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria. I will defend this city for my sake and for the sake of my servant David' " (verses 4-6). GOP 31.1

# C. Daniel's advice to Nebuchadnezzar: GOP 31.2

This is the interpretation, Your Majesty, and this is the decree the Most High has issued against my lord the king: You will be driven away from people and will live with the wild animals; you will eat grass like cattle and be drenched with the dew of heaven. Seven times will pass by for you until you acknowledge that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone he wishes. The command to leave the stump of the tree with its roots means that your kingdom will be restored to you when you

acknowledge that Heaven rules. Therefore, Your Majesty, be pleased to accept my advice: Renounce your sins by doing what is right, and your wickedness by being kind to the oppressed. It may be that then your prosperity will continue (*Dan. 4:24-27*). *GOP 31.3* 

God gave Nebuchadnezzar one year of grace (see verses 29-33), but because of his arrogance and pride, the Lord humiliated him in order to bring him closer to Himself. *GOP 31.4* 

At the end of seven years Nebuchadnezzar praised the most high God, because he realized that this God is the ultimate sovereign king: *GOP 31.5* 

At the end of that time, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven, and my sanity was restored. Then I praised the Most High: I honored and glorified him who lives forever. His dominion is an eternal dominion; his kingdom endures from generation to generation. All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing. He does as he pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. No one can hold back his hand or say to him: "What have you done?" At the same time that my sanity was restored, my honor and splendor were returned to me for the glory of my kingdom. My advisers and nobles sought me out, and I was restored to my and even throne became greater than before. Nebuchadnezzar, praise and exalt and glorify the King of heaven, because everything he does is right and all his ways are just. And those who walk in pride he is able to humble (verses 34-37). GOP 31.6

Conditionality is the nature of classical predictive prophecies (while unconditional). 70See "Bible Study: prophecies are Presuppositions, Principles, and Methods," voted by the General Conference Committee at Annual Council, Rio de Janeiro, Oct. 12, 1986, published in the Adventist Review. Jan. 22. 1987. 18-20 (available online at https://adventistbiblicalresearch.org/materials/bible-interpretation-

hermeneutics/methods-bible-study). Was the time of the first coming of Jesus conditional? No, because "when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law" (*Gal. 4:4*, ESV; see also *Dan. 9:24-27*). The first coming of Jesus did not depend on human reaction! *GOP 32.1* 

Is the second coming of Jesus conditional? The answer is no as to the event itself, but yes as to the time He will come. John mightily affirms: "And he swore by him who lives for ever and ever, who created the heavens and all that is in them, the earth and all that is in it, and the sea and all that is in it, and said, 'There will be no more delay [chronos = period of time]!' " (Rev. 10:6). Pay close attention to the recognition that Revelation 10:6 does not use kairos, i.e., a specific point in time, but chronos, which points to the specific period of time. It means that after 1844 there is no longer a prophetic period of time! The second coming of Jesus Christ will come whether we are ready or not! "The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9).GOP 32.2

# The Third Principle

The prophecy is conditional if the same or a later prophet/biblical author explains that the previous prophecy was conditional, because the situation had changed or people's attitudes of stubbornness or indifference. GOP 32.3

For example, see how God spoke about Nebuchadnezzar's attack on Tyre: "For this is what the Sovereign Lord says: 'From the north I am going to bring against Tyre Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, king of kings, with horses and chariots, with horsemen and a great army' " (Eze. 26:7; see also verses 8-11). God predicts to Nebuchadnezzar a splendid plunder: GOP 32.4

They will plunder your wealth and loot your merchandise; they will break down your walls and demolish your fine houses and throw your stones, timber and rubble into the sea. I will put an end to your noisy songs, and the music of your harps will be heard no more. I will make you a bare rock, and you will become a place to spread fishnets. You will never be rebuilt, for I the Lord have spoken, declares the Sovereign Lord (verses 12-14). GOP 32.5

Nebuchadnezzar besieged Tyre for 13 years (from 586/585 to 573/572 B.C.). <sup>71</sup>Josephus quotes the Phoenician (=Tyrian) archives (Against Apion 1.156) and also Philostratus' history (Antiquities 10.228).. However,

Nebuchadnezzar never fully conquered Tyre! A new interpretation is given in *Ezekiel 29*, where God promises to give him Egypt as his spoil instead of Tyre: *GOP 33.1* 

Son of man, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon drove his army in a hard campaign against Tyre; every head was rubbed bare and every shoulder made raw. Yet he and his army got no reward from the campaign he led against Tyre. Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord says: "I am going to give Egypt to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and he will carry off its wealth. He will loot and plunder the land as pay for his army" (*Eze. 29:18, 19*). *GOP 33.2* 

## The Fourth Principle

Prophecy is conditional when it is stated in the setting of a covenant. A covenant contains the element of conditionality. Fitting examples of such covenant conditional prophecies are those in relation to the restoration of Israel, like creation of the New Jerusalem in the setting of the new heavens and the new earth (*Isa.* 65:17-25); the Gog and Magog prophecy (*Eze.* 38; 39); rebuilding of the Ezekiel's Temple (*Eze.* 40-48); and the establishment of God's kingdom according to *Zechariah* 14.GOP 33.3

# Can an Old Testament Prophet Err?

It's not as simple to answer this question as it might seem. Can a biblical prophet make a mistake, go astray, get it wrong, or say or teach something that is not right? We would like to have a straight answer, either yes or no. For some even to suggest such a possibility or ask such a question borders on a denial of truth and seems like heresy. So we need to clarify and explain what we mean by it, because it is a legitimate question, as will be demonstrated below. This study dealing with this important issue of prophetic erring is divided into seven categories. *GOP 33.4* 

The basic premise is that the answer to our provocative and challenging question must be given on the basis of the biblical text. We need to let the Scripture decide it, and we have to be careful not to impose on the life of prophets our own understanding, ideas, concepts, or wishes. This is why the examples will be taken from the rich prophetic scriptural record. This biblical investigation may be supported by the helpful opinion of scholars or theologians, but their views are not our primary focus. *GOP 33.5* 

I have a very high regard for the Holy Scriptures. I believe that the Bible is the Word of God— not that the Bible only contains the Word of God or becomes the Word of God under specific conditions (1 Cor. 2:13; 1 Thess. 2:13; 2 Tim. 3:15-17; 2 Pet. 1:19-21). I adhere that the Holy Scripture has the highest authority in matters of faith and practice; it provides the standard for truth and morality. I concur with the sola Scriptura principle, which means that all things must be judged "by Scripture alone." The Bible is foundational and normative, as well as the highest judge in matters of beliefs, behavior, and ethics. GOP 33.6

With this background, our basic question remains: Can a prophet make mistakes? Our first answer to this question is yes. Of course, I need to qualify what I mean by it. In what sense can one speak about prophetic erring? There is a difference between a mistake and a mistake. Not all mistakes have the same value and consequences. Let's carefully consider different categories of mistakes. GOP 34.1

#### In Personal Life

Prophets may make mistakes, commit sins, or err in their personal behavior. Unfortunately, the Bible gives many examples. Consider the following prophets: *GOP 34.2* 

- A. Abraham (Gen. 12-25), who did not always trust God, lied about his wife and asked her to lie (twice), and married Hagar. However, he grew in the Lord, and after his death made an astonishing declaration about him: "Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws" (Gen. 26:5, ESV).GOP 34.3
- B. Moses (Ex. 2:14; Num. 20:11, 12; Deut. 32:51) murdered an Egyptian guard and twice struck the Rock (instead of talking to it). However, God in His enduring love proclaimed about him: "Since then, no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face" (Deut. 34:10). GOP 34.4
- C. David (2 Sam. 11; 12), for example, committed adultery and murdered his close friend to cover his sin. However, God gave the most incredible testimony when He communicated with King Jeroboam: "I tore the kingdom away from the house of David and gave it to you, but you [Jeroboam] have not been like my servant David, who kept my commands and followed me with all his heart, doing only what was right in my eyes" (1 Kings 14:8). GOP 34.5
- D. Balaam (Num. 22-25) is a very negative example because of his love of money, his selfishness, and his evil advice—a true prophet who apostatized! GOP 34.6

On the other hand, we need to carefully observe the lives of the prophets Enoch, Joseph, and Daniel because there are no records of their mistakes (*Gen. 5:22-24*; 50:19-21; Dan. 6:4, 5, 22)! An important reflection comes out from this brief summary, namely, that true prophets are human in the sense that they can sin and make mistakes in their private lives, but they do not stay in sin! One of the best representations of the true repentance is David (see *Pss. 32*, 51, and 139; cf. *Dan. 9:4-20*). *GOP 34.7* 

#### In Personal Advice

Can a prophet err in giving personal advice? Mistakes may occur in a prophet's personal statements. However, in these circumstances, they have not used the formula "Thus says the Lord." A model example of this category of mistake is recorded in *2 Samuel 7* when David encounters the prophet Nathan and expresses his wish to build the Temple for the Lord. *GOP 34.8* 

Nathan responded to David's deep and sincere desire: "Go ahead and do it, for the Lord is with you" (2 Sam. 7:3). This advice seemed reasonable, but note carefully that Nathan did not say to David that this was God's declaration. This admonishing was the personal counsel of the prophet Nathan to King David, but because it was a serious mistake, God immediately corrected it. "That night the word of the Lord came to Nathan, saying: 'Go and tell my servant David, "This is what the Lord says: Are you the one to build me a house to dwell in?" '" (verses 4, 5). GOP 35.1

The prophet Nathan had to humbly change his previous instruction, but this time with a solemn introductory formula stressing the divine origin of his speech. *GOP 35.2* 

## In Grammar and Spelling

Prophets can make grammatical mistakes (unless we would blame later copyists for all the mistakes, but this is highly unlikely) and misspell words. When one faces a grammatical problem, the principle is to study the purpose, intention, overall message, and theology of such prophetical statements. *GOP 35.3* 

Today we live a great distance in time from the biblical writers in order to understand their language, geography, customs, habits, and culture fully. We also know that some prophets used literary help. The classical example is Jeremiah, who worked closely with Baruch. See the whole story in *Jeremiah* 36, especially *verses* 4-10, and 28.GOP 35.4

## In Quoting by Memory

Biblical writers may quote by heart other books of the Old Testament and may not mention all sources. Could some details

have slipped from their memory? Two examples suffice to support this observation: 1. *Mark 1:2*, 3 are quotations from *Malachi 3:1* and *Isaiah 40:3*, but are not only from Isaiah, as the Gospel according to Mark states. However, the NKJV has an alternative translation built on the Textus Receptus: "As it is written in the Prophets: 'Behold, I send My messenger . . ." (*Mark 1:2*). 2. *Matthew 27:9* is a clear quote from *Zechariah 11:12*, 13 (with some elusive allusions to *Jeremiah 19:1-13* or 18:2-12 or 32:6-9), but not from Jeremiah, as Matthew claims. *GOP 35.5* 

#### In Historical Details

Can prophets or biblical writers speak about events and not record all the details with precision? Can a prophet err in reporting stories and writing narratives? Two types of errors may be found: GOP 35.6

- 1. One may detect plain numerical mistakes and speak of incidental discrepancies. The following three examples are recognizable: A. According to 2 Samuel 10:18, David defeated the Arameans killing 700 charioteers and 40,000 horsemen. In 1 Chronicles 19:18 the numbers given are 7,000 charioteers and 40.000 foot soldiers. *GOP* 35.7
- B. In 1 Kings 4:26, ESV, we are told that Solomon had 40,000 stalls of horses, while in 2 Chronicles 9:25, ESV, we read that he had 4,000 stalls. GOP 36.1
- C. Jehoiachin was 18 years old when he became king according to 2 Kings 24:8, ESV, but in 2 Chronicles 36:9, ESV, the age given is 8.GOP 36.2
- It is quite obvious that these numerical discrepancies can be explained as scribal errors. GOP 36.3
- 2. One may see specific historical inaccuracies in details: GOP 36.4
- A. Inscription on the cross with its charge against Jesus.
- a. "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews" (Matt. 27:37).
- b. "The King of the Jews" (Mark 15:26).
- c. "This is the King of the Jews" (Luke 23:38).
- d. "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews" (John 19:19).GOP 36.5

Even though one can observe discrepancies in specifics, nevertheless, the main point is preserved. Each Gospel mentions the inscription from a theological perspective. In addition, they were written in three languages—Aramaic, Latin, and Greek. GOP 36.6

Gospel writers sometimes are not interested in providing specific historical details. History is important for them as the background; therefore some discrepancies between the Gospels can be explained from the theological perspective and emphasis of the author. *GOP* 36.7

- B. How many demon-possessed men did Jesus heal? Were there one or two persons? GOP 36.8
- 1. Matthew 8:28-34—Two demon-possessed men are mentioned.
- 2. Mark 5:1-20—One man with an evil spirit is described.
- 3. Luke 8:26-37—0ne demon-possessed man is given. GOP 36.9
- C. One or two blind persons healed near Jericho? GOP 36.10
- 1. Two blind people were healed when Jesus went out of Jericho (*Matt. 20:29-34*).
- 2. One blind person was healed when Jesus was leaving the city, and his name is given as

Bartimaeus (*Mark 10:46-52*; see also *Luke 18:35-43*), but Mark mentions that it happened

when Jesus was approaching Jericho. GOP 36.11

One crucial observation needs to be plainly stated: all these historical inaccuracies are minor, and they do not destroy the overall picture nor distort the message or main point of the narrative. Each case of seeming discrepancy needs to be carefully studied and evaluated. GOP 36.12

Many critics of the Bible would like to claim that the Scriptures are not a trustworthy source of truth. According to critical scholarship, the Bible allegedly contains many historical inaccuracies and mistakes. In reality, it has been proven time and again that the Word of God is historically reliable and truthful. For example, in the introduction to the book of Daniel it is stated that "in the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of

Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. And the Lord delivered Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, along with some of the articles from the temple of God. These he carried off to the temple of his god in Babylonia and put in the treasure house of his god" (Dan. 1:1, 2). The Babylonian Chronicles describe the very first years of Nebuchadnezzar's reign with a very accurate picture. The Battle of Carchemish, which occurred in May/June 605 B.C., is described, in which Necho, pharaoh of Egypt, clashed with Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. Surprisingly, the Egyptian pharaoh Necho was defeated, and this victory opened Syro-Palestine territory to Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel 1:1, 2 perfectly fits the whole description with amazing accuracy. 72A. K. Grayson, Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles (Locust Valley, N.Y.: J. J. Augustin Publisher. 1975), 99, 100. See also William H. Shea, "Nabonidus, Belshazzar, and the Book of Daniel: An Update," Andrews University Seminary Studies 20 (Summer 1982): 133-149.GOP 37 1

The fall of Babylon occurred in October 539 B.C. According to Daniel, 5 Belshazzar was the king in Babylon, a fact denied by historical-critical scholars. 73See the scholarly discussion on this point between William H. Shea, "Bel(te)shazzar Meets Belshazzar," and Lester L. Grabbe, "The Belshazzar of Daniel and the Belshazzar of History," in Andrews University Seminary Studies 26 (Spring 1988): 57-81. However, we know that Nabonidus entrusted Belshazzar with the kingship when he left for Teman, where he stayed for 10 years. According to Daniel 5, Nabonidus offers to Daniel the third-highest position in the Babylonian kingdom, obviously third in power after Nabonidus and Belshazzar. Historical records reveal that Nabonidus was not in the city when it fell. Only an eyewitness could present with such historical precision all the details as it is recorded in Daniel 5 (for historical extrabiblical details, see Nabonidus Chronicles and Verse Account of Nabonidus).74James B. Pritchard, ed., Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament, 3rd ed. with supplement (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1969), 306, 313. GOP 37.2

# In Predicting the Future

One of the many characteristics of God's prophets is that their prophecies are to be fulfilled: "If what a prophet proclaims in the

name of the Lord does not take place or come true, that is a message the Lord has not spoken. That prophet has spoken presumptuously, so do not be alarmed" (*Deut.* 18:22).GOP 37.3

Fulfillment of the prophecy is important. It is one of the characteristics of knowing that the prophecy is genuine. The prophet is vindicated by the event. But consider the following text: *GOP 37.4* 

If a prophet, or one who foretells by dreams, appears among you and announces to you a miraculous sign or wonder, and if the sign or wonder of which he has spoken takes place, and the prophet says, "Let us follow other gods" (gods you have not known) "and let us worship them," you must not listen to the words of that prophet or dreamer. . . . It is the Lord your God you must follow, and him you must revere (*Deut. 13:1-4*).*GOP 38.1* 

False prophets' predictions can occur as stated, and they can be even accompanied by miracles. These predictions can be fulfilled, but if they lead away from the living God and His truth, these prophets should not be listened to. A3 classical prophetic example is the great opposition of many false prophets against the prophet Jeremiah. GOP 38.2

The story recorded in *Jeremiah* 27-28 happened around 593 B.C. during the reign of Zedekiah (597-587/6), the last king of Judah. He was put on the throne by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, and swore allegiance to him. Even though Babylon was a dominant power at this time, Judah rebelled against Babylon and turned for help to Egypt. Jeremiah's message to Zedekiah, king of Judah, was powerful: Be faithful to God and submit to Babylon. But this message was interpreted as political treason! *GOP* 38.3

Jeremiah experienced a constant battle with false prophets. He had to strongly unmask them: "So do not listen to your prophets, your diviners, your interpreters of dreams, your mediums or your sorcerers who tell you, 'You will not serve the king of Babylon.' They prophesy lies to you that will only serve to remove you far from your lands" (*Jer.* 27:9, 10). Jeremiah performed a symbolic action: "This is what the Lord said to me: 'Make a yoke out of straps and crossbars and put it on your neck'" (verse 2). "I gave the same

message to Zedekiah king of Judah. I said, 'Bow your neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon; serve him and his people, and you will live' " (verse 12). GOP 38.4

Afterward Jeremiah went to the temple, and there he met Hananiah, a false prophet. Hananiah said to Jeremiah in the presence of the priests and other people: GOP 38.5

This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: "I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon. Within two years [593-591 B.C.] I will bring back to this place all the articles of the Lord's house that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon removed from here and took to Babylon [605 B.C.]. I will also bring back to this place Jehoiachin son of Jehoiakim king of Judah and all the other exiles from Judah who went to Babylon," declares the Lord, "for I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon" (*Jer.* 28:2-4).GOP 38.6

Then the prophet Jeremiah replied to the prophet Hananiah before the priests and all the people who were standing in the house of the Lord. He said, "Amen! May the Lord do so! May the Lord fulfill the words you have prophesied by bringing the articles of the Lord's house and all the exiles back to this place from Babylon. Nevertheless, listen to what I have to say in your hearing and in the hearing of all the people: From early times the prophets who preceded you and me have prophesied war, disaster and plague against many countries and great kingdoms. But the prophet who prophesies peace will be recognized as one truly sent by the Lord only if his prediction comes true" (verses 5-9). GOP 38.7

Hananiah took the yoke off the prophet Jeremiah's neck and broke it in a spectacular way and said: "This is what the Lord says: 'In the same way I will break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon off the neck of all the nations within two years.' At this, the prophet Jeremiah went on his way" (verse 11). Then came God's genuine Word to Jeremiah: "Go and tell Hananiah, 'This is what the Lord says: You have broken a wooden yoke, but in its place you will get a yoke of iron. This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: I will put an iron yoke on the necks of all these nations to make them serve Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and they will serve him' " (verses 13, 14). After this Jeremiah predicted: "Listen,

Hananiah! The Lord has not sent you, yet you have persuaded this nation to trust in lies. Therefore this is what the Lord says: 'I am about to remove you from the face of the earth. This very year you are going to die, because you have preached rebellion against the Lord' " (verses 15, 16). GOP 39.1

If you lived in those times, how could you know that God was speaking through Jeremiah and not through Hananiah? You could wait and see the result: "In the seventh month of that same year, Hananiah the prophet died" (verse 17). What would be Zedekiah's decision? Zedekiah rebelled against Babylon, and thus against God, His message, and His messenger! Tragic results came in 587/6 B.C.: Jerusalem was completely destroyed, the Temple burned down, people deported into Babylonian captivity, and the nation ceased to exist—national catastrophe par excellence. Then comes Zedekiah's personal tragedy (2 Kings 25:5-7): Zedekiah was captured and brought to Riblah, where his two sons were killed before his eyes, and he was then blinded, put in shackles, and taken into the Babylonian captivity. What a personal tragedy! If only he had trusted the Lord; if only he had listened to His prophet; if only he had obeyed His word! GOP 39.2

Two questions impose themselves: GOP 39.3

A. Must true prophecies be fulfilled? GOP 39.4

Yes! The Scripture is eloquent on this point: "When all this comes true—and it surely will—then they will know that a prophet has been among them" (Eze. 33:33).GOP 39.5

"Seventy weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy" (*Dan. 9:24*, NKJV). To seal up the vision and prophecy means to authenticate the prophetic vision. It refers to the fulfillment of the 70-week prophecy. If these dates referring to the coming, mission, and death of the Messiah were fulfilled, this would provide for the reader a confidence that the rest of the prophecy would also be fulfilled, namely the prophecy about the 2300 evenings and mornings (*Dan. 8:14*). Fulfillment of the 70-week prophecy is the proof that the

larger prophecy of the 2300 evenings and mornings will take place too. GOP 39.6

Only God can really predict the future: "This is what the Lord says—Israel's King and Redeemer, the Lord Almighty: I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God. Who then is like me? Let him proclaim it. Let him declare and lay out before me what has happened since I established my ancient people, and what is yet to come—yes, let him foretell what will come" (Isa. 44:6, 7).GOP 39.7

# B. Must all true prophecies be fulfilled?

No, because some prophecies are conditional (for details, see the second part of this study, on the conditionality of the prophetic voice). GOP 40.1

#### In Doctrinal Matters?

Observe judiciously that all six previous categories of examples have nothing to do with doctrinal teachings or ethical commands of the biblical writers. The crux of the matter is the question related to prophetic erring in doctrine, matters of faith, or ethical teaching. Can a biblical author mislead in doctrine or in presenting the plan of salvation? My answer is categorically no; prophets do not make doctrinal mistakes. GOP 40.2

Why not? Because (1) there are no examples that would convincingly demonstrate that prophets made mistakes in doctrines or ethics; and (2) the Holy Spirit protected and guarded this domain of faith and practice. The Spirit of the Lord is the ultimate author of the biblical message and preserved it from these kinds of errors (2 Tim. 3:15-17; 2 Peter 1:19-21). It was done by the supernatural work of God. This fact we accept by faith, and our spiritual life totally depends on it. This is why the Bible has the highest authority for our beliefs and behavior! He led and watched over the process of the transmission of His Word. This is why we believe that God's Word is infallible. The reason lies in its inspiration by God. GOP 40.3

God's design and purpose is clear: The Bible is the norm and the highest judge in matters of doctrine and life. Otherwise the church tradition or the teaching office of the church (the Magisterium) or we personally or corporately as the church or as a specific group of believers would determine and decide what to believe and what not to believe, and how to behave. It would be based on our own subjective understanding. However, we as believers in God are always under the ultimate judgment of God's Word! We believe that the Bible is the objective revelation of God for matters of faith and life. Thus, the crucial principle can be formulated in the following way: *Prophets do not err in matters that determine doctrine and practice!GOP 40.4* 

I am not aware of any example in which prophets made prescriptive mistakes when their words apply universally. They can personally do things that we can disagree with and that we should not follow today, because they are only descriptive. We should follow what biblical authors command or admonish—if it has a universal

application—when it is prescriptive! This is a crucial distinction—we need to recognize what is descriptive and what is prescriptive. Sometimes their method to achieve things could be inappropriate, and we always need to apply sound hermeneutical and exegetical principles in order to interpret such instances. *GOP 40.5* 

A suitable example is provided in the book of Nehemiah. Nehemiah wanted to reform his people, because their children were not able to speak Hebrew. We read what Nehemiah did in this situation: *GOP* 41.1

In those days also I saw the Jews who had married women of Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab. And half of their children spoke the language of Ashdod, and they could not speak the language of Judah, but only the language of each people. And I confronted them and cursed them and beat some of them and pulled out their hair. And I made them take oath in the name of God, saying, "You shall not give your daughters to their sons, or take their daughters for your sons or for yourselves" (Neh. 13:23-25, ESV). GOP 41.2

"And one of the sons of Jehoiada, the son of Eliashib the high priest, was the son-in-law of Sanballat the Horonite. Therefore I chased him from me" (verse 28, ESV). This is not what the teachers of Hebrew or pastors should do. It has a descriptive and not a prescriptive value. Another example could be the prophet Elijah on Mount Carmel who, after God's spectacular intervention and demonstration that He is the true living Lord, went and killed all the false prophets (1 Kings 18:16-40), or how he asked for fire from heaven to destroy groups of soldiers (2 Kings 1; compare with Luke 9:51-56). GOP 41.3

Can a prophet grow in his understanding? Absolutely! Moses (*Ex. 19-34*); Daniel (*Dan. 7:28*; 8:27; 9:2); Peter (*Acts 10*; 11; *Gal. 2:11-16*; 2 Peter 3:15); Paul (God's revelation; three years in Arabia; see *Gal. 1:11-24*); and disciples of Jesus (*Acts 1:6-8*) all had learning curves. However, growing in understanding does not mean that prophets previously said wrong things relating to creation, sin, and salvation, but only that they would be able to explain things more fully. Peter explains: *GOP 41.4* 

Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the

grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. GOP 41.5

It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look (1 Peter 1:10-12, ESV). GOP 41.6

Two questions intrude themselves: Can an inspired author use literary sources when speaking for God, or does that author receive everything directly from God? Can extra biblical material be employed when the words of God are uttered? Behind these questions is an implied issue, namely, whether utilization of non-inspired writings by the biblical author negates inspiration. GOP 41.7

The biblical model of inspiration is a thought model (also referred to as the incarnation theory of inspiration), where the divine is put into human form; the divine truth is expressed in our human language under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. Thus, the divine and human are put together, but in such a way that the result is the firm Word of God. This is a stand of faith that calls for further explanation. <sup>75For</sup> details, see Ellen G. White, Selected Messages (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald®, 1958), 1:20, 21; Peter M. van Bemmelen, Issues in Biblical Inspiration: Sanday and Warfield (Th.D. diss., Andrews University, 1987); idem, "Revelation and Inspiration," in Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology, ed. Raoul Dederen (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald ®, 2000), 23-45; Fernando Canale, "Revelation and Inspiration," in Understanding the Scripture: An Adventist Approach, ed. George W. Reid (Silver Spring, Md.: Biblical Research Institute, General Conference of SDA, 2005), 47-72; idem, Understanding Revelation-Inspiration in a Postmodern World (Berrien Springs, Mich.: by the author). See also Seventh-day Adventist fundamental belief 1, in Seventh-day Adventists Believe, 247-261; Alberto R. Timm, "Understanding Inspiration: The Symphonic and Wholistic Nature of Scripture," Ministry, August 1999, 12-15; Jo Ann Davidson, "The Word Made Flesh: The Inspiration of Scripture," Journal of the Adventist Theological Society 15 (Spring 2004): 21-33; Ekkehardt Mueller, "The Revelation, Inspiration, and Authority of the Scripture," Ministry, April 2000, <sup>21-25.</sup> Prophets were children of their time, place, and culture. <sup>76For</sup>

further details, see chapter 3 in this volume: Ángel M. Rodríguez, "Revelation/Inspiration and the Witness of Scripture." For further details, see Ánael Rodríauez. Μ. chapter this volume: "Revelation/Inspiration and the Witness of Scripture." God's message was given in different literary forms (including nonverbal through symbolic acts), such as narrative, prose, poetry, stories, songs, genealogies, prayers, parables, prophecies, dialogues, laws, and praises, and everything was stated in a human language. In other words, what we have in the Bible did not fall directly from heaven, and it is not expressed in a divine or angelic language! It went through a process. GOP 41.8

There is no difficulty in accepting that prophets used thoughts of other inspired prophets. There are many examples of how later authors quote, paraphrase, conceptualize, or allude to the work of the previous writers (compare, for example, Micah 4:1-3 with Isaiah 2:1-4; Psalms 96, 105, and 106 with 1 Chronicles 16; Hosea 11:1 with Exodus 4:22: Ezekiel 38:2 with Revelation 20:8). The author of Chronicles used several sources, and a number of them are mentioned in the text. For instance, reference is made to "the account of the chronicles of King David" (1 Chron. 27:24, NKJV) and "the book of the kings of Judah and Israel" (2 Chron. 25:26). These are most probably court records to which the biblical writer had access and from which information was obtained in the composition of the biblical book. The author speaks of additional books: "As for the events of King David's reign, from beginning to end, they are written in the records of Samuel the seer [ro'eh], the records of Nathan the prophet [nabi] and the records of Gad the seer [chozeh]" (1 Chron, 29:29), GOP 42.1

The real issue is whether a prophet can borrow some thoughts from uninspired sources. Can the biblical author quote or use non biblical written material? 77See samples of previous studies on the topic: Tim Crosby, "Does Inspiration Mean Original?" Ministry, February 1986, 4-7; George E. Rice, Luke, a Plagiarist? (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press®, 1983); Juan Carlos Viera, The Voice of the Spirit: How God Has Led His People Through the Gift of Prophecy (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press®, 1998). It should not be a shock for the student of the Bible to realize that biblical authors used extra biblical sources in their books. 78For a detailed study, see chapter 5 in this publication: Elias Brasil de Souza, "The Hebrew Prophets and

the Literature of the Ancient Near East." They borrowed key vocabulary, used similar literary concepts and structures such as chiasms or biblical covenants, implemented some features from common laws and known literature, and performed similar ceremonies, such as tithe, prayer, and circumcision (see Luke 1:1-3, Acts 17:28, Jude 14, 15; Rev. 1:17, 18). 79For an in-depth study of these different issues, see my article, "Can a Biblical Inspired Writer Use Literary Sources?" in Ellen White Issues Symposium 8 (2012): 70-102. Are prophets human? Of course they are. I have never heard of a divine prophet (except for the Prophet Jesus Christ). Does the prophet's human fragility negate his/her message that goes beyond their circumstances and culture? The principles they present are relevant for all times. Many of those who stress that prophets are human usually have their own agenda. Behind such reasoning is often the assumption that there are no absolutes. They usually claim that the revealed truth is relative and one needs to interpret the message of the Bible according to contemporary cultural understanding. GOP 42.2

Is the biblical message culturally conditioned? Yes and no! Biblical writers are children of their time and culture; and even though they express their message through cultural means, such as language, grammar, syntax, thought patterns, metaphors, symbols, and pictures, their message is transcultural because it comes from above, and not from the *Sitz im Leben* context or perspective. God's message is given in our human expressions so we can understand it as He wishes to communicate effectively with us. For example, see the Decalogue, which is expressed in specific cultural terms (e.g., "out of Egypt"; "within your gates"; no wife is mentioned in the fourth commandment), but the principles are eternal. Or the structure of biblical covenants is similar to the suzerain-vassal Hittite treaties, but the content is new and of divine origin. *GOP 43.1* 

Similarly, the biblical creation accounts have anti-mythological elements. God's command to Moses articulates the cultural element of how to show respect: "Take off your sandals." In that time this categorical expression taught reverence for God (*Ex. 3:5*; see also *Josh. 5:15*). Even though God's revelation is stated in a particular culture, its message transcends our human experience, because God's truth is above culture! God expresses in and through our culture His universal truth, purposes, and eternal principles under

the guidance of the Holy Spirit. There is a danger in interpreting God's message: we can put our reason above God's revelation. We can dissect, reconstruct, divide, and accept only things we think may apply or fit to our world of understanding, and thus we become selective. We need to interpret Scripture, but when doing it, we need to remember that our reasoning and our best interpretation of the prophetic message is only preliminary and never final. We are always under the judgment of God's Word, and He has the last word! We need to humbly accept God's message and bow down before the I AM! "But this is the one to whom I will look [declares the Lord]: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word" (Isa. 66:2, ESV). GOP 43.2

#### Conclusion

The prophetic role is multifaceted. We discovered that prophets are people who are called by God to the prophetic ministry; they are His messengers and speakers for Him, the guardians of God's theocracy and faithful morality, the servants of His covenant, and the genuine interpreters of the past, present, and future. They are watchers over God's truth and not its inventors. They are the proclaimers of the divine word, and they represent God because the word of the Lord came to them. Prophecies were never delivered by magic or the process of divination (*Num. 24:1*). The content of their message was always the most important, and the stress was upon the word of the Lord. Prophets are a symbol of God's presence, the voice of God among people. They lead people to a genuine covenantal relationship with the Lord. *GOP 43.3* 

The teachings of a new prophet need to be in inner harmony and unity with the teachings of previous prophets. A prophet is more than a presenter of the right picture of God while correcting wrong perceptions. The prophetic role is very comprehensive: exegete of the past and predictor of the future, spokesperson for God, a person of insight (seer), a person of vision (vizier), a man of God, a man of the Spirit, a person of the Word, a servant of the covenant, a mediator, revivalist, reformer, pastor, evangelist/missionary, social reformer and educator, teacher of righteousness and guardian of the law of God. Prophets differ from priests or kings, and their functions are irreplaceable. However, not all roles need to be present in one prophet in order to function as a prophet or be recognized as one. In one word: a prophet is a representative of God to His people. Prophets help people make right decisions in their present situations of life. GOP 44.1

It was a deliberate choice of biblical writers to use sources—canonical or extracanonical, inspired or uninspired—in order to communicate God's Word to humanity efficiently. They were people of their culture, and they employed the best literary devices to transmit faithfully the eternal message of God. Prophets used styles, concepts, language, and sources of their time in order to communicate competently with their contemporary audience. The purpose was mainly missiological. Biblical authors did not live in

isolation, and they were in conversation with literature known in their time. They were using extra biblical material as a means to prove their own point of view, and they were also polemic or apologetic. They used contemporary literature, structures, and thoughts, because it helped them to articulate God's message effectively and precisely. GOP 44.2

God's inspiration was working in choosing the right words, concepts, and material that express biblical truth in a very efficient and beautiful way. Divine wisdom and human thoughts are put together in such a way, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, that the final result is the sure prophetic Word of God. The Holy Spirit guided the mind of these authors as the whole person was inspired to convey trustworthy inspired messages. Thus, it was to the advantage of the biblical authors to use different extra biblical material, since it enabled them to communicate well with their audience and/or readers. GOP 44.3

There are implications of my study for the ministry of Ellen G. White. It may be observed that her ministry fits well into the Old Testament view of different roles of the prophet. Another significant and unsurprising result of our study is that Ellen G. White's confirmed use of extra- biblical materials should not be considered problematic, because Old Testament prophets, as well as New Testament writers, did the same. She might make mistakes in some spheres of her life, but we maintain that she did not err in matters of doctrine and in giving instructions for the practical life of faith (ethics), as Old Testament prophets did not make mistakes in matters that determine doctrine and practice. They do not err in predicting the future (even though classical prophecies are conditional) when they interpret the plan of salvation. What they state about the blueprint of redemption is solid. The purity of God's revelation was guarded by the special work of the Holy Spirit, who is the ultimate author of God's Revelation, which was transmitted to us by Inspiration through the prophets and the biblical writers. This is why the Bible is normative, foundational, and the highest authority in matters of doctrine (faith) and practice (behavior, ethics) 80Even though the Bible is not a textbook on science, history or astronomy, the truth it presents is historically reliable, scientifically accurate, and in harmony with reality of life. It is the infallible Word of God. "The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever" (*Isa. 40:8*, NKJV). The Word of God stands forever because God stands forever. It means that those who stand with the Lord and His Word will stand forever with Him. *GOP 44.4* 

True prophets are ambassadors for God. This is why those who listen to their voice prosper. We can fully trust God and His prophets. Our future depends on this trust. I am grateful for the gift of prophecy—for the firm word of prophets! But it can do good to us only if we pay close attention to the admonition of King Jehoshaphat: "Listen to me . . .! Have faith in the Lord your God and you will be upheld; have faith in his prophets and you will be successful" (2 Chron. 20:20).GOP 45.1

# Chapter 2 - The Prophetic Voice in the New Testament: An Overview

#### Ekkehardt Mueller

Prophecy is an important topic in the New Testament and is too broad to be captured in one article. Therefore, this article serves as an introduction to the topic of prophecy in the New Testament. Others studies should develop the topic in more depth and spell out the implications for modern readers. *GOP 46.1* 

The topic "The Prophetic Voice in the New Testament" may point to two major aspects: First, the person of the New Testament messenger, that is, the prophet, that delivers some kind of information and communication; and, second, the prophetic message of the New Testament itself. This article will focus on the prophetic voice and yet will also briefly attempt to address the prophetic message. GOP 46.2

# **Prophetic Ministry in the New Testament: The Vocabulary**

In this section we will take a look at the vocabulary that describes prophets and point to a few individuals in whom the prophetic gift was found. A brief analysis of the relation of New Testament prophecy to Old Testament prophecy will then be in order. A short discussion of the gift of prophecy will follow and, afterward, also a review of the nature, role, and function of New Testament prophets. *GOP 46.3* 

## Vocabulary Describing the Prophetic Ministry in the New Testament

Although word studies must be approached with great care—because the context determines to a large extent the meaning of a term—they may still furnish significant data. This is what we find on the topic of prophecy. While the Old Testament uses four major terms to describe a prophet, *nabi* (prophet—309 times), <sup>1In addition</sup>, the related terms "prophetess," "prophecy," and "to prophesy" of the same word family are used. *ro'eh*. (seer—11 times), *hozeh* (seer—16 times), and 'is 'elohim (man of God—76 times), the New Testament limits itself to the word family *prophet* - and may occasionally refer to prophecy indirectly. The LXX translates *nabi* consistently with *prophetes* (prophet) and uses this term occasionally also for ro'eh and *hozeh*. *GOP* 46.4

The word family prophet - in the New Testament consists of the following terms: (1) prophetes (prophet—144 times), (2) prophetis (prophetess—twice), (3) propheteuo (to prophesy—28 times), (4) propheteia (prophecy—19 times), (5) prophetikos (prophetic—twice), and (6) pseudoprophetes (false prophet—11 times). 2Pseudoprophētēs is already found in the LXX to describe false prophets (Zech. 13:2; Jer. 6:13; 33:7, 8, 11, 16; 34:9; 35:1; 36:1, 8, LXX counting of chapters and verses), while the Hebrew employs nābî' for both genuine and false prophets. The context must tell what kind of a prophet the respective person is. The sheer number of 206 instances of usage of the word family indicates the importance of the topic prophecy in the New Testament. 3E.g., the important word "grace" is found 155 times, and "salvation" and "to save/heal" (sōtēria and sōzō) 46 and 106 times. GOP 47 1

Before taking a look at this New Testament word family, the general use of prophecy in the Greco-Roman world should be noted. M. E. Boring declares that the terms *prophet, prophecy*, and *prophetic* did not function univocally. . . . "Prophet" was used not only to mean "one who speaks for a god and interprets his will" to human beings, but also for the cultic official keepers of the oracles (at Brachidae), for members of the highest order of the priesthood (in Egypt), for herbalists and quack doctors, for the interpreters of the oracles of the *mantis* (Plato, Ti. 72a), and hence derivatively for poets as such (cf. *Titus 1:2*, of Epimenides), and then metaphorically for proclaimers in general, including the announcer at the games. <sup>4M.</sup> Eugene Boring, "Early Christian Prophecy," in The Anchor Bible Dictionary, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 5:496. Cf. George E. Rice, "Spiritual Gifts," in Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology, ed. Raoul Dederen (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald®, 2000), 620. GOP 47.2

This broad concept of prophecy is much more limited in the New Testament. Although it is important to understand how a term was used in general society, it does not mean that all its aspects are also present in Scripture. GOP 47.3

Therefore, Boring provides a more limited definition of what a prophet is in the New Testament era: "The early Christian prophet was an immediately-inspired spokesperson for God, the risen Jesus, or the Spirit who received intelligible oracles that he or she felt impelled to deliver to the Christian community or, representing the community, to the general public." 5Boring, 5:496, explains this statement: "Since the term 'inspiration' is used in a variety of senses, 'immediatelyinspired' is used here to express the prophetic claim that what he or she says represents the present, immediate voice of the deity. This does not exclude the use of sources, traditions, or the prophet's own reflections, all of which may be involved in the delivery of what the prophet perceives as directly revealed from the deity." A prophet has received divine revelation and under inspiration communicates what he or she has receivedwhether through visions, auditions, dreams, etc. 6Cf. Rice, 621, 622. to people, typically believers, but at least indirectly also the general public. He or she is a spokesperson for God. This understanding of a prophet has to be verified through the biblical data, but in our case, the New Testament data. 7See also Gerhard Friedrich, "Prophets and Prophecies in the New Testament," in Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, ed. Gerhard Friedrich (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), 6:828-856. GOP 47.4

## The Term "Prophet" (prophetes)

The term "prophet" is used unevenly throughout the New Testament, as the following table indicates. Some New Testament writings do not contain it at all (and therefore they are not mentioned in the subsequent chart), while others have a heavy concentration *GOP* 48.1

<i>Prophets</i> in Books	NT Number References	of
Matthew	37	
Mark	6	
Luke	29	
John	14	
Acts	30	
Romans	3	
1 Corinthians	6	
Ephesians	3	
1 Thessalonians	1	
Titus	1	
Hebrews	2	
James	1	
1 Peter	1	
2 Peter	2	
Revelation	8	
Total	144	

The highest concentration in one biblical book is found in Matthew. 8If one takes the writings of Luke together the term is found 59 times. In the Johannine literature it occurs 22 times, and in the Pauline body of writings 16 times. We will take Matthew's Gospel as a test case of how the term "prophet" is used. *GOP 48.2* 

1. In the majority of the cases "prophet" refers to a specific Old

Testament prophet or to Old Testament prophets in the plural (21 times). 9Matt. 1:22; 2:5, 15, 17, 23; 3:3; 4:14; 5:12; 8:17; 12:17, 39; 13:17, 35; 16:14; 21:4; 23:29, 30, 31; 24:15; 26:56; 27:9. Matthew points out that the predictions of Old Testament prophets have been fulfilled, and he shows the continuity between Old Testament and New Testament in this respect. *GOP 49.1* 

- 2. "Prophet" also occurs in the phrase "the Law and the Prophets" describing the entire Old Testament (four times—*Matt. 5:17*; 7:12; 11:13; 22:40).GOP 49.2
- 3. John the Baptist is a true prophet (four times—*Matt. 11:9* [twice]; 14:5; 21:26) in line with the Old Testament prophets and yet is the first New Testament prophet after the Intertestamental Period of about 400 years, during which genuine prophecy did not occur as far as we know. *GOP 49.3*
- 4. Jesus Himself is considered to be and indeed is a prophet (twice directly—*Matt.* 21:11, 46— and once indirectly in a general statement about prophets—*Matt.* 13:57).GOP 49.4
- 5. There are prophets in general (four times—*Matt.* 10:41 [three times]; 23:37).*GOP* 49.5
- 6. There are prophets that Jesus sends (once—*Matt. 23:34*). So prophets come with a wide range of meaning. *GOP 49.6*

The other New Testament writings reflect one or more of these uses found in Matthew, but they may contain special emphases. For instance, Luke mentions Jesus about five times as a prophet, which is more than what is found in Matthew. John is even more pronounced in this respect. All of his eight references to "prophet" in his Gospel deal with Jesus directly or indirectly. Jesus is a prophet. John the Baptist confesses not to be *the* prophet (*John 1:21, 25*), because Jesus is not just a prophet but also *the* prophet, predicted by Moses, the second Moses, the prophet that surpasses all other prophets (verses 21, 25; *John 6:14; 7:40*). GOP 49.7

A special focus on New Testament prophets appears in 1 Corinthians and Acts (e.g., *Acts 11:27*; *15:32*; *21:10*). We will return to both of these New Testament books later. *GOP 49.8* 

Paul connects prophets to ecclesiology. Prophets have received a special spiritual gift (e.g., 1 Cor. 12:28, 29). There are New Testament prophets in the church (e.g., 1 Cor. 14:29). The foundation of the church is Jesus and, to some extent, also the apostles and prophets (*Eph. 2:20*). Apostles and prophets have received divine revelation (*Eph. 3:5*) about the nature of the church. Church leadership consists of apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastor-teachers (*Eph. 4:11*). A Cretan prophet is mentioned in *Titus 1:12*. However, he is not a prophet in the biblical sense but considered so by his compatriots. *GOP 49.9* 

New Testament prophets occur again in the Apocalypse. The prophets in Revelation 10:7 may be both Old Testament and New Testament prophets. 10See Grant E. Osborne, Revelation, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 401. The two witnesses of Revelation 11, understood as Old Testament and New Testament. 11See Kenneth A. Strand, "The Two Witnesses of Rev. 11:3-12," Andrews University Seminary Studies 19 (1981): 134; and Ekkehardt Mueller, "The Two Witnesses of Revelation 11," Journal of the Adventist Theological Society 13, no. 2 (2002): 30-45. are also called the two prophets (Rev. 11:10). Prophets appear repeatedly with the saints (verse 18; Rev. 16:6; 18:24) with whom they will be rewarded. but also with the apostles (Rev. 18:20). Some of them will be killed (Rev. 16:6; 18:24). John, the author of Revelation, is a prophet himself, who belongs to the group of prophets (Rev. 22:6, 9). The term "prophet" in Revelation describes only genuine prophets and the two witnesses. The prophets are called servants of God (Rev. 10:7; 11:18). It seems that this term describes only persons who have the specific gift of prophecy, as distinct from other believers. The term is not used loosely in the sense of what has been called today the prophetic ministry of a pastor or the church. GOP 49.10

In summary, the term "prophet" is used quite frequently in the New Testament. It is distributed unevenly and found most frequently in the Gospels and Acts. Although frequency points to the pervasiveness of the topic, the sheer number of occurrences should not lead the reader to disregard authors that use the term sparingly, yet with more theological weight. In the New Testament prophets are referring to Old Testament prophets, the Old Testament as a

whole, John the Baptist, Jesus, and New Testament prophets. In his Gospel, John reserves the term "prophet" basically for Jesus, who is a prophet and the predicted prophet as an antitype of Moses. 120ther authors, especially Matthew, use also Moses-Jesus typology—however, without applying the term "prophet." However, in Revelation, "prophets" are John and mainly New Testament prophets. Jesus is primarily the Lamb but also the Lord of lords and King of kings, the Son of man and Son of God, etc. He does not appear as prophet in the Apocalypse. This marked difference between Jesus' position in John's Gospel and Revelation may be the result of His incarnation depicted in the Gospel and His heavenly role and His exaltation described in Revelation. Paul employs "prophets" in texts in which he discusses ecclesiology—for instance, when he talks about spiritual gifts, leadership, and the foundation of the church. GOP

## The Term "Prophetess" (prophetis)

The female form of "prophet," prophetis occurs twice in the New Testament. Once it is used positively and once negatively. The genuine female prophet in the New Testament is Anna of the Lukan birth narrative (Luke 2:36). After having encountered Baby Jesus, "she began to give thanks to God and to speak of Him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem" (Luke 2:38, ESV). The false prophetess is Jezebel (Rev. 2:20). While she deceives the children of God, she claims to be a prophetess. However, biblical prophetesses are not limited to theses two characters. There are others that are not described with this term but by the prophesy" discussed below—and verb "to vet are prophetesses. GOP 50.2

# The Term "Prophecy" (propheteia)

The noun *propheteia* ("prophecy") is found 19 times in the New Testament. The highest concentration occurs in 1 Corinthians (five times) and the book of Revelation (seven times). Only once in the New Testament does "prophecy" describe Old Testament prophecy (*Matt. 13:14*), which differs significantly from the use of the term "prophet" in the New Testament, which—as we have seen—refers

frequently to Old Testament prophets. GOP 50.3

In Romans 12:6 and in 1 Corinthians 12-14 the term "prophecy" describes the spiritual gift of prophecy, sometimes in contrast to the gift of tongues. <sup>131</sup> Cor. 12:10, 13:2, 8; 14:6, 22. Because of its divine origin, "prophecies" should not be despised (1 Thess. 5:20). It was through prophecies that Timothy's ministry was established and confirmed (1 Tim. 1:18; 4:14).GOP 51.1

In Revelation 1:3; 22:7, 10, 18, 19 the phrases "the words of this prophecy" / "the words of the prophecy of this book" / "the words of the book of this prophecy" refer to the book of Revelation itself. Although Revelation consists largely of apocalyptic literature, it is declared to be prophecy. This is interesting because earlier scholarship did not see the origin of apocalyptic literature in prophecy but in wisdom literature 14Cf. Paul D. Hanson, Old Testament Apocalyptic (Nashville: Abingdon, 1987), 26, 33; Klaus Koch, Ratlos vor der Eine Streitschrift über ein vernachlässigtes Gebiet Bibelwissenschaft und die schädlichen Auswirkungen auf Theologie und Philosophie (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1970), 43, 44; Peter von der Osten-Sacken, Die Apokalyptik in ihrem Verhältnis zur Prophetie und Weisheit (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1969), 9-12, 28-31; Christopher Rowland, The Open Heaven: A Study of Apocalyptic in Judaism and Early Christianity (New York: Crossroad, 1982), 203-208. On the other hand, see Ferdinand Hahn, Theologie des Neuen Testaments, Band 1. Zweite Auflage (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 471, who clearly recognizes and shows the prophetic character of the Apocalypse. See especially Boring, "Early Christian Prophecy," in The Anchor Bible Dictionary, 5:500. or in myths. 15Cf. John J. Collins, The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to the Jewish Matrix of Christianity (New York: Crossroad, 1989), 21-28; Hanson, 26, 33, 34; Von der Osten-Sacken, 13, 28. GOP 51.2

In Revelation 19:10 "the testimony of Jesus" is declared to be "the Spirit of prophecy," that is, the Holy Spirit that speaks through the gift of prophecy. <sup>16</sup>This "testimony of Jesus" is what already John and "his brothers" in the first century A.D. "had." The same phrase occurring in Revelation 12:17 in connection with the end-time remnant is used here by the angel that told John not to worship him because he was just a fellow servant of him and other early Christians that "had the testimony of Jesus," namely "the Spirit of prophecy." These people are called "prophets" in the parallel text in Revelation 22:9. They

"keep [NASB, "heed"] the words of this book," the book of Revelation. This definition of "testimony of Jesus" affects all other references to "testimony of Jesus" in the book of Revelation 17Revelation 1:2, 9; 12:17; 19:10 (twice); 20:4 (ESV). In Revelation 1:2, 9 and 20:4 (ESV) the "testimony of Jesus" appears with the "word of God." Kenneth Strand. "The Two Witnesses of Rev 11:3-12," Andrews University Seminary Studies 19 (1981): 134, would call the phrase "the word of God and the testimony of Jesus" as "the OT prophetic message and the NT apostolic witness." When the remnant are declared to have the testimony of Jesus (Rev. 12:17), they are affirmed of having through the Holv Spirit the Book of Revelation 18See Revelation 22:9, which is parallel to 19:10. and corporately the prophetic gift, "the Spirit of prophecy," i. e., the ministry and message of true prophets in canonical form (New Testament) or non canonical form. 19See the parallel between Revelation 19:10 and 22:9. In the parallel text Revelation 22:9 the word "prophets" replaces the phrase "testimony of Jesus." The remnant lift up God's word and genuine manifestations of the gift of prophecy (1 Cor. 12:7-11; Eph. 4:11), including the book of Revelation, which comes from Jesus and in which Jesus testifies about Himself. See also Ángel Manuel Rodríguez, "The 'Testimony of Jesus' in the Writings of Ellen G. White," in Toward a Theology of the Remnant, Biblical Research Institute Studies in Adventist Ecclesiology—I, ed. Ángel Manuel Rodríguez (Silver Spring, Md.: Biblical Research Institute, 2009), 227-243. The latter includes—according to Adventist understanding—the ministry of Ellen G. White. F. Hahn states that the testimony of Jesus is the content of the prophecy, while the Holy Spirit is its power. He suggests that the last part of Revelation 19:10 is the key to understanding Revelation. It reveals how the author has understood his prophetic ministry, <sup>20Cf.</sup> Hahn, <sup>1:472</sup>. Empowered by the Holy Spirit he would proclaim the victory of the risen Christ. GOP 51.3

The two witnesses of *Revelation 11:6* are not only prophets, but are also associated with the term "prophecy." This must be so, if they indeed represent the Old and New Testaments. In addition, two texts in 2 Peter, namely 1:20 and <sup>21See</sup> the references provided in footnotes <sup>11</sup> and <sup>17</sup>., associate "prophecy" with Scripture and claim that prophets were inspired by God. *GOP 52.1* 

Thus propheteia describes primarily the spiritual gift of prophecy but

even more frequently designates the canonical book Revelation, the New Testament, and even all of Scripture. *GOP 52.2* 

#### The Term "to Prophesy" (propheteuo)

Another important term of the word family is *propheteuo* (to prophesy). This verb occurs 28 times in the New Testament. It points to the prophetic ministry of the entire Old Testament (*Matt.* 11:13), the ministry of Old Testament prophets, including Enoch (*Matt.* 15:7; *Mark* 7:6; 1 Peter 1:10; Jude 14), and Joel's prediction about the outpouring of the Holy Spirit with subsequent prophesying by believers (*Acts* 2:17, 18). GOP 52.3

In the New Testament occasional prophesying occurred without necessarily implying that the involved person was a prophet. Cases were Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist (Luke 1:67), and the high priest Caiaphas (John 11:51). People claimed to prophesy in Jesus' name (Matt. 7:22), but they may have been false prophets (Matt. 7:15). The passion narrative indicates that Jesus was ridiculed and mocked and challenged to prophesy (Matt. 26:68; Mark 14:65; Luke 22:64). The ministry of Philip's daughters (Acts 21:9), John's representative ministry, describing the task of believers of the end-time (Rev 10:11), and the ministry of the two witnesses (Rev. 11:3) are also mentioned. Acts 19:6 with its rebaptism ceremony and the reception of the Holy Spirit with accompanying speaking in tongues and prophesying reminds us of Pentecost. GOP 52.4

The heaviest concentration of the term "to prophesy" appears in 1 Corinthians, where it describes the spiritual gift and function of prophesying (1 Cor. 11:4, 5; 13:9; 14:1, 3-5, 24, 31, 39).GOP 52.5

S o propheteuo in the New Testament acknowledges the Old Testament phenomenon but focuses almost exclusively on what is happening in the New Testament. The gift of prophecy was active in New Testament times; as Schnelle states: "Prophetic speech is a normal ingredient of early Christian church life." <sup>22Udo Schnelle,</sup> Theology of the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), <sup>337</sup>·GOP 52.6

#### The Term "Prophetic" (prophetikos)

The adjective *prophetikos* (prophetic) appears only twice in the New Testament and yet is very important in that it describes the prophetic writings (Rom. 16:26) and the prophetic word (2 Peter 1:19). Like the other terms, it is closely linked to and qualifies the Bible. *GOP* 53.1

## The Term "False Prophets" (pseudoprophetes)

While the word family *prophet* - may refer to both true prophets or to a false prophetic claim— the context must decide— nevertheless the New Testament uses also the term *pseudoprophetes* (false prophet) to make it very clear that an imitation of the divine gift exists that needs to be avoided. False prophets are mentioned 11 times in the New Testament. *GOP* 53.2

Jesus recognized that already in the Old Testament false prophets existed (*Luke 6:26*). He warned his contemporaries against false prophets (*Matt. 7:15*) and pointed also to future false prophets (*Matt. 24:11, 24; Mark 13:22*). *GOP 53.3* 

Acts 13:6 mentions the Jewish false prophet Bar-Jesus of the first century. While 2 Peter 1:21 explains that the Holy Spirit moved God's spokespersons, the very next verse contrasts them with false prophets that introduce heresies (2 Peter 2:1). John confirmed that in his generation "many false prophets have gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1, NKJV). GOP 53.4

The book of Revelation adds a new dimension: There are not only many false prophets, there is also *the* false prophet, the climax of all false prophecy, the land beast of *Revelation 13* (*Rev. 16:13*; 19:20; 20:10). When it comes to the final showdown, the satanic dragon, the antichrist, and the false prophet (i.e., the beast coming out of the earth) will oppose the true Lord and Christ. It is interesting that the Gospel of John and the book of Revelation focus on the major figures of the great controversy, while John's letters mention the minor players (antichrists and false prophets) in addition to the major player (the antichrist—1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2 John 1:7).GOP 53.5

# New Testament Prophets Who Are Not Directly Called "Prophet"

In our search for New Testament prophets we encountered some persons that were called prophets. Among them one finds John the Baptist (*Matt. 11:9*), Anna (*Luke 2:36*), Jesus (*Luke 24:19*), Judas and Silas (*Acts 15:32*), and Agabus (*Acts 21:10*). John the Baptist reminded his contemporaries of the prophets of old calling people to repentance; and yet "as the immediate forerunner and herald of God's saving history," <sup>23Boring, 498</sup>. the coming of the Messiah, he was more than a prophet. Agabus is mentioned twice in Acts. We hear less about him than about John the Baptist, whose miraculous birth narrative is recorded in Luke 1 and his horrible death in *Matthew 14:11*. In the case of Agabus readers are informed about two predictions that he made and that came true: the predictions of a great famine (*Acts 11:28*) and Paul's imprisonment (*Acts 21:11*). *GOP 53.6* 

There were other prophets that, however, remained unnamed. We have little or no information on their activities. One group is mentioned in *Acts 11:27*. The prophets and teachers in Antioch were involved in setting apart Paul and Barnabas for their ministry (*Acts 13:1-3*). Obviously they included "Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen . . . and Saul" (NKJV). D. L. Book suggests: "In this case, there appears to be an overlap between the two roles of prophet and teacher for these five; it is not clear if there is a distinction made here in the lists as to who did what." <sup>24</sup>Darrell L. Bock, Acts, Baker Exegetical Commentary of the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 439. See also Craig S. Keener, Acts: An Exegetical Commentary, Volume 2, 3:1-14:28 (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 1982, 1983; Eckhard J. Schnabel, Acts, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 553, 554. *GOP 54.1* 

Philip's daughters are not called "prophets" or "prophetesses." We just hear that they prophesied and thus followed their calling (*Acts 21:9*). In this case at least one of the terms of the word family prophet- is used. Another example is the apostle John, the author of Revelation. He "does not specifically use *prophetes* of himself, but nonetheless claims to write *propheteia* (*Rev. 1:3*; 19:20; 22:7, 10.

18, 19) and to belong to the group of the *prophetai* (*Rev. 22:9*)." 25Boring, 500. See also Revelation 10:11. John also uses vision and audition formulas to describe how he received divine revelations: "I heard" (*Rev. 1:10*, NKJV), "I saw" (*Rev. 5:1*). Even a heavenly journey is recorded (*Rev 4:1*, 2). "Like Old Testament prophets, John used the phrase TaSe Aeyev [these things says] (*Revelation 2-3*)." 26F. David Farnell, "The Gift of Prophecy in the Old and New Testaments," Bibliotheca Sacra 149, no. 4 (1992): 397. GOP 54.2

But sometimes the word family *prophet* - is missing completely, and yet a person is a prophet. For instance, Paul is not called a prophet, and yet he must have been one. He did not only exhort, comfort, and challenge church members, building up the church, but he also made various prophecies, for example, about the man of lawlessness (2 Thess. 2), the future resurrection (1 Cor. 15), and Christ's second coming (1 Thess. 4). In 2 Corinthians 12:1-7 he gives us a report about himself, which includes the claim that he had visions from God and divine revelations. While Paul was an apostle, he also was a prophet. GOP 54.3

Would that also apply to Peter and others? We do not know precisely, but a lack of specific language is not an indication that they may not have had the prophetic gift. One has also to take into consideration that oftentimes their life stories are not recorded. Peter has left us only two short letters. The chances to hear more about him personally are much slimmer than with Paul. In his second epistle he provides additional insights about what will happen at the day of the Lord, the judgment day (2 Peter 3). This is a prophecy, most likely based on divine revelation. In 2 Peter 1:14 Peter talks about his imminent death and states: "as our Lord Jesus Christ has showed me" (NKJV). Jesus had talked about Peter's death in John 21:18, 19. However, apart from speaking about his advanced age, Jesus had not indicated the nearness of Peter's death. Therefore, in 2 Peter 1:14 the apostle may have referred to a special revelation that he received from the Lord. The term deloo can be rendered "to make clear," "to reveal," "to show," and "to give information." In the LXX of Exodus 6:3 and Daniel 2:28-30, as well as in other places, this verb points to revelation. "Since the context is about the prediction of someone's death, we should understand the term within the frame of divine revelatory communication."

27Gene L. Green, Jude and 2 Peter, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 212. A number of arguments in support of this statement are provided on pages 212, 213. These hints may place Peter into the category of a prophet. *GOP 54.4* 

# Summary

The results of our study so far can be summarized as follows: *GOP* 55.1

- 1. Prophecy is an important topic in the New Testament. It has to do with God and divine self-revelation and the Lord's attempt to communicate through the prophets with humanity, especially with His children. GOP 55.2
- 2. The prophets mentioned and described in the New Testament are Old Testament prophets, New Testament prophets, and Jesus as prophet par excellence. In Him the office of the prophet reaches its climax. GOP 55.3
- 3. In the Pauline writing prophets are linked to the topic ecclesiology. The ministry of prophets is one of the spiritual gifts. "Prophecy, in fact, is the only constant in Paul's 'lists' of charismata (1 Corinthians 12:8-11, 28-30; 13:1-2; Romans 12:6-8)." <sup>28Boring, 498.</sup> Prophecy belongs to the leadership gifts. The church is "built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone" (*Eph. 2:20*, NKJV). Therefore, prophets have a foundational ministry. *GOP 55.4*
- 4. Prophets can be male or female. "Their presence and activity were widespread (cf. *Acts 20:23* with *21:10*, *11*). . . . They worked within the framework of the Church." <sup>29A</sup>. Lamorte and G. F. Hawthorne, "Prophecy, Prophet," in Evangelical Dictionary of Theology, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984), 887. *GOP 55.5*
- 5. The messages of genuine prophets come both in oral form (see Agabus) and in written form (see John and the Apocalypse). The written form of prophecy can be either canonical or noncanonical. See Paul's Second Letter to the Thessalonians as an example of canonical prophecy and Paul's letter to the Laodiceans—Colossians 4:16—as an example of noncanonical prophecy. 30 Obviously, noncanonical prophecy coming from a genuine prophet is as authoritative as an oral prophetic message. GOP 55.6
- 6. The term "prophecy" points to and is linked to the book of

Revelation, the New Testament, and to Scripture as a whole. "The Spirit of prophecy" 30Although it is discussed whether Paul wrote the letter or someone else did, it is widely support by scholars that Paul was its author. See, e.g., James D. G. Dunn, The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon, The New International Greek Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 286, 287: Eduard Lohse. Colossians and Philemon. Hermeneia — A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), 174, 175; Petr Pokorný, Der Brief des Paulus an die Kolosser, Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament 5 (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1990), 164; Charles H. Talbert, Ephesians and Colossians, Paideia Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 242; Marianne Meye Thompson, Colossians and Philemon, The Two Horizons New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 107. In addition, the Corinthian correspondence seems to indicate that Paul wrote at least one additional letter to the believers in Corinth (1 Cor. 5:9; 2 Cor. 2:3, 4) that has not been preserved in the canon. is the Holy Spirit that speaks through the gift of prophecy, that is, the ministry and the messages of genuine prophets, including that of Ellen G. White, as Adventists believe. GOP 55.7

- 7. While the New Testament highlights the importance of genuine prophecy, it clearly warns against false prophets with their heresies. It also provides criteria to distinguish between the true and the false. Revelation adds a new dimension by singling out the false prophet, the climax of all false prophecy, which will be involved in the last showdown between the divine powers and the satanic agencies. GOP 56.1
- 8. Although the vocabulary "prophet," "prophecy" or "to prophesy" is frequently associated with prophets of God, in the New Testament other vocabulary or other concepts may also be used to identify persons as genuine prophets. A prophet, whether called so or not, would receive divine revelations that he or she communicates with God's people and/or humanity. GOP 56.2
- 9. Here we have to pause for a moment. When talking about the gift of prophecy, one has to also speak about the giver of the gift, the Holy Spirit. As just mentioned, He is called Spirit of prophecy in Revelation. As such He is pervasive in the book, <sup>31See</sup> Ekkehardt Müller, "O Espírito Santo no Livro de Apocalipse," in Reinaldo W. Siqueira and Alberto R. Timm, orgs., Pneumatologia: pessoa e obra do Espírito Santo

(Engenheiro Coelho, SP, Brazil: Unaspress, 2015), 321-352. especially through the related term "testimony of Jesus." The activity of the Holy Spirit as Spirit of prophecy is, for instance, clearly exhibited at the end of all messages to the seven churches, namely, through the phrase "what the Spirit says to the churches" (e.g., Rev. 2:7). The Spirit of prophecy, although not called this way, is also very active in the book of Acts. He is associated with the word family prophet — in Acts 2:17, 18; 19:6; 28:25. The Holy Spirit spoke (lego) to Philip (Acts 8:29), to Peter (Acts 10:19; 11:12,13), and to the prophets in Antioch (Acts 13:1, 2). He spoke (laleo) through the prophet Isaiah (Acts 28:25). On the other hand, Paul and Timothy were "forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia" (Acts 16:6, NASB). The Holy Spirit testified (liamartyromai) to Paul. However, the Holy Spirit did not only speak to the prophets but also through them. He foretold (prolego) things and spoke (lego) through the mouth of David (Acts 1:16; 4:25). Finally, Agabus approached Paul and told him: "This is what the Holy Spirit says" (Acts 21:11, NASB). The source of true prophecy is the Holy Spirit. GOP 56.3

# The Relation Between Old Testament Prophecy and New Testament Prophecy

Many have raised the question of how Old Testament prophecy relates to New Testament prophecy. This is an issue widely discussed. GOP 56.4

W. A. Grudem probably tried to find "a middle ground" that is "acceptable to both" 32F. David Farnell, "Fallible New Testament Prophecy/Prophets? A Critique of Wayne Grudem's Hypothesis," The Master's Seminary Journal 2, no. 2 (1991): 157. those who believe that the genuine gift of prophecy has ceased to exist and Charismatics who believe it is very active even today. He suggests that there is a significant difference and, therefore, discontinuity between Old Testament and New Testament prophets. In his opinion, Old Testament prophets were infallible, while New Testament prophets were not. He claims that "the Greek word prophetes ('prophet') at the time of the New Testament had a very broad range of meanings. It generally did not have the sense 'one who speaks God's very words' but rather 'one who speaks on the basis of some external influence." " 33Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 1050. And he adds: "There are many indications in the New Testament that this ordinary gift of prophecy had authority less than that of the Bible, and even less than that of recognized Bible teachings in the early church." 34lbid., 1051. For instance, he uses Ephesians 2:20, which talks about the foundation of the apostles and prophets, and concludes that this is a single group, because prophets cannot be on the same level with apostles. 35Wayne A. Grudem, The Gift of Prophecy in the New Testament and Today (Westchester, III.: Crossway, 1988), 55, 56. He also holds that the prophet Agabus erred (Acts 21:10, 11). 36Grudem, The Gift of Prophecy in the New Testament and Today, 96-100. GOP 56.5

Grudem's arguments were seriously investigated and heavily critiqued by a number of scholars and theologians. For instance, D. L. Akin notes, "Grudem provides no exegetical clue for distinguishing errant New Testament prophets from inspired prophets and apostles." <sup>37Daniel L. Akin, ed., A Theology for the Church</sup>

(Nashville: B&H Academic, 2007), 675. N. Geisler refuted W. Grudem, arguing in favor of continuity between Old Testament and New Testament prophecy.

38Norman Geisler, Systematic Theology (Minneapolis: Bethany, 2011), 1184, 1185. Responding to Grudem, he writes: "First, Agabus's prophecy was not false. . . . Second, that prophets could be interrupted does not mean their message was not from God. . . . Third, that New Testament believers were told to judge or weigh what was being offered as a prophecy does not imply that an actual prophetic utterance could be a false prophecy. . . . Fourth, and finally, many Old Testament prophets did not preface with 'Thus saith the Lord' or the like; the phrase is not essential" (1184). R. L. Thomas charged Grudem of mishandling the New Testament text.

39Robert L. Thomas, "Prophecy Rediscovered: A Review of the Gift of Prophecy in the New Testament and Today,"Bibliotheca Sacra 149, no. 593 (1992): 96. GOP 57.1

The biblical data seem to suggest that there is a basic continuity between Old and New Testament prophecy, and yet there are a few elements of discontinuity that, however, do not threaten that continuity. *GOP* 57.2

# **Elements of Discontinuity**

One of the differences between prophecy in the Old Testament and prophecy in the New Testament is that with the coming of the Messiah also a new eon arrived. The kingdom of God, as Jesus said, was now in humanity's midst (*Luke 17:21*). Eventually this brought about significant changes to society, the people of God, and the cult. GOP 57.3

Jesus was the climax of the line of the prophets. "The impact he

made, whether on the crowds (Matt. 21:11; Mark 6:15; 8:28; Luke 7:16) or on individuals (Luke 7:39; Matt. 26:68; John 4:19; 9:17), was such as to make them feel they were in the presence of one of the classic figures of prophecy." 40Rino Fisichella, "Prophecy," in Dictionary of Fundamental Theology, ed. René Latoun and Rino Fisichella (New York: Crossroad, 1994), 791. Fisichella suggests five points that may have characterized Jesus as a prophet: "a. Jesus interpreted the Sacred Scriptures b. Jesus uttered prophecies c. Jesus performed prophetic actions. ... d. Predictions of his passion and glorification . . . e. Jesus as visionary "41lbid., 791, 792. Yet he surpassed all prophets. While Jesus was not out of sync with the Old Testament prophets, He still cannot be completely compared with them. Jesus Christ was unique, and His ministry was unique. "Jesus always and only acted in the first person, and this, for a prophet, was unthinkable." 42lbid., 792. When discussing prophecy, one has to ask how the gift of prophecy is "redefined" by the message and life of

• The gift of prophecy culminated in Jesus, the man of the Spirit, as in nobody before and after Him. GOP 58.1

the prophet. This needs to be further explored. But in this article it

may suffice to provide some hints: GOP 57.4

- His call to repentance took on a unique urgency and radicalness, as seen, for example, in the unsurpassed Sermon on the Mount. The same is true for His call to love. GOP 58.2
- Jesus did not only communicate a divine message—He was the embodiment of His message, the perfect representative of His Father, and a member of the Godhead. *GOP 58.3*

- He wanted His entire audience to become His followers, disciples. This would change their lives completely. *GOP 58.4*
- Jesus did not only announce the possibility of salvation—He is the Savior. GOP 58.5
- He did not only talk about judgment—He is the Judge. GOP 58.6
- In the life of Jesus there was absolute congruence between message and life as in none of the prophets, because Jesus was without sin. GOP 58.7

Before the coming of the Messiah, the Jewish society and the people of God were intertwined. This changed with the presence of Jesus. People had to make a decision for or against Him. Those who accepted Jesus as Christ became His ekklesia, His church (Matt. 16:18) and His flock (John 10:16). This flock was not limited to Judaism, but included Gentiles in such a way that Paul would call it a mystery (Eph. 3:4-6). A new "Israel" was created. This affected the ministry of New Testament prophets. GOP 58.8

The coming of the Messiah affected also the cult and rendered obsolete the Temple service with its sacrifices and priestly ministration. A new form of worship developed, along with a new form of church governance. The Old Testament priesthood found its fulfillment in the ministry of Jesus and came to an end. The believers the priesthood. community of was new "democratization" <sup>43</sup>Robert M. Johnston, "Leadership in the Early Church During Its First Hundred Years," Journal of the Aventist Theological Society 17, no. 2 (2006): 6, uses this term when he talks about spiritual gifts. "By placing apostleship among the charismata, Paul completes its 'democratization,' making it available to anyone to whom the Holy Spirit should choose to distribute it." of the Spirit took place at Pentecost, when Jesus poured out the Spirit on all believers. Some were called to serve as apostles, elders, deacons, and pastor-teachers. GOP 58.9

These changes affected also the prophetic ministry in New Testament times. The New Testament prophet would focus even more on Jesus, His life, His words, and His acts than the Old Testament prophet had focused on the Messiah. 44Fisichella, 794,

suggests: "For this reason alone, the NT is already substantially different from the OT prophet." And he adds, 794: "The prophecy is 'the testimony of Jesus' (Rv 19:10); its purpose is to make the Lord's word present, alive, and immediate for the community." In this sense we can talk about some kind of discontinuity or change that occurred with the coming of the new eon, the shift from Old Testament to New Testament. GOP 58.10

# **Basic Continuity**

Yet, in spite of some discontinuity, the New Testament highlights the basic continuity between Old Testament and New Testament prophecy. Here are some examples. *GOP 59.1* 

#### **Prophetic Figures**

With John the Baptist, the line of the renowned Old Testament prophets, interrupted by the Intertestamental Period, was continued. Not only did his appearance, clothing, and lifestyle remind his contemporaries of some of the Old Testament prophets, his message did also. Seeing him, people recalled Elijah, and yet he was more than Elijah. He prepared the way for the Messiah. John W. Hilber maintains that the monumental transition in the kingdom that took place around the advent of Messiah and the founding of his church was accompanied by a flurry of prophetic activity. The proclamations around the birth of Jesus correspond in form and function with OT cultic prophecy. <sup>45See</sup> John W. Hilber, "Diversity of OT Prophetic Phenomena and NT Prophecy," Westminster Theological Journal 56 (1994): 255. Rice, 625, specifies: "With the opening chapter of Luke, the prophetic gift is seen in the hymns of Elizabeth, Mary, and Zechariah. All four gospels record the prophetic ministry of John the Baptist." *GOP* 59.2

Agabus performed a symbolic action (*Acts 21:10*, *11*), <sup>46Richard I. Pervo, Acts, Hermeneia — A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009), 537, claims: "The manner, a prophet who appears without preparation, the verbal style, and the use of symbolism are all characteristic of prophecy in the Hebrew Bible." as did, for instance, Jeremiah and Ezekiel (*Jer. 13*; *Eze. 12*; *25*), and John the revelator (*Rev. 10:8-11*; *11:1*). His predictions of future events came true, fulfilling the Old Testament test for a genuine prophet. *GOP 59.3*</sup>

#### **Old Testament Prophecy in the New Testament**

Old Testament prophets appear frequently in the New Testament, and their message was foundational to the content not only of the Old Testament but also to the message of the New Testament. All major theological themes of the Old Testament are continued in the

New Testament, beginning with the revelation of the Godhead, creation, sin, anthropology, and moving on to salvation, covenant, law, judgment, and eschatology, to name just a few. The New Testament is saturated with Old Testament quotations, allusions, and echoes. "*Prophetes* and its cognates are used in fulfillment formulas in New Testament citations of Old Testament prophets." 47Farnell, "The Gift of Prophecy," 398. GOP 59.4

The typological approach to understanding Scripture, first employed in the Old Testament, is carried on in the New Testament, and both parts of Scripture are strongly linked through this approach. <sup>48See,</sup> e.g., Richard M. Davidson, "New Testament Use of the Old Testament," Journal of the Adventist Theological Society 5 (1994): 14-39; idem, "Biblical Interpretation," in Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology, Commentary Reference Series, vol. 12, ed. Raoul Dederen (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald®, 2000), 83, 84; G. K. Beale, "Did Jesus and His Followers Preach the Right Doctrine From the Wrong Texts? An Examination of the Presuppositions of Jesus' and the Apostles' Exegetical Method," Themelios 14 (1989): 89-96. GOP

The foundational nature of prophets in the New Testament is expressed in *Ephesians 2:20*. <sup>49</sup>For a discussion of the verse, see Farnell, "The Gift of Prophecy," 407-409. In this case the prophets should not be understood as Old Testament prophets but as New Testament prophets. Throughout the letter to the Ephesians, Paul consistently understands prophets as New Testament prophets, in each case associated but not identical with the apostles and referring to the first century A.D. (Eph. 2:20; 3:5; 4:11). 50See Ernest Best, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Ephesians, The International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments (London: T. & T. Clark, 2004), 282, 283; Andrew T. Lincoln, Ephesians, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 42 (Dallas: Word, 1990), 153; Peter T. O'Brien, The Letter to the Ephesians, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 214-216; Frank Thielman, Ephesians, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010.), 180, 181. Franz Mußner, Der Brief an die Epheser, Ökumenischer Taschenbuch-Kommentar zum Neuen Testament 10 (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1982), 93, mentions that he has changed his position, subscribing now to New Testament prophets instead of Old Testament prophets. GOP 60.2

Old Testament predictions are fulfilled, for instance, in the New Testament messianic predictions or the prediction of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on all flesh, including the prophetic gift (*Joel 2:28* and *Acts 2*, especially verse *17*). "The same spirit who empowered the Old Testament prophets is promised once again to return." 51Farnell, "The Gift of Prophecy," 388. There was a restoration of the prophetic gift as known in the Old Testament. Farnell concludes: *GOP 60.3* 

It is highly significant that Peter tied this beginning of New Testament prophecy with prophetic phenomena of the Old Testament. The word  $\pi\rho\sigma\rho\eta\tau\epsilon\dot{\omega}\omega$  ("to prophesy"), which Peter used in Acts 2:17, is also used in the Septuagint in Joel 3:1 (2:28, Eng.). . . . In light of this, Joel 2 and Acts 2 establish a fundamental continuity between Old and New Testament prophecy. <sup>52Ibid., 393</sup>. See also pages 388-393. GOP 60 4

### Prophetic Language and Experience

The same prophetic terminology (the word family prophet -), used already in the LXX, appears in the New Testament with no direct statements or hints that a shift in meaning has occurred. <sup>53Cf. ibid.</sup>, 398, where he states: "Clearly the New Testament makes no distinctions in vocabulary or phraseology between the Old and New Testament prophecy or prophets." We will discuss 1 Corinthians 14 later. Prophetic revelation and speech formulas, such as "(and) I saw" (kai eidon). 54For instance, (kai) eidon, ("[and] I saw"), referring to divine revelations, occurs in the LXX [canonical part) of the Old Testament prophetic writings, e.g., Isaiah 6:1; Jeremiah 4:24; Ezekiel 1:14, 15; Daniel 8:4, 6, 7; Amos 9:1; Habakkuk 3:7, as well as in Acts 26:13 and Revelation 5:1; 7:1; 8:2; 9:2, etc. The Greek of the Aramaic part of Daniel uses another term—however, with the name basic meaning (theoreo-Dan. 4:13; 7:2). The full formula (kai) eidon kai idou ("I saw and behold") occurs eight times in Ezekiel (e.g., 1:4, 15), twice in the Greek of the Hebrew part of Daniel (8:3 [however, only Theodotion]; 12:5 [both LXX and Theodotion]), five times in Zechariah (1:18; 2:1; 5:1, 9; 6:1), and seven times in Revelation (4:1; 6:2, 5, 8; 7:9; 14:1, 14). The rare term ophtē is used in a visionary sense in Jeremiah 38:3 and Daniel 8:1 (Theodotion) as well as in Revelation 11:19; 12:1, 3. "(and) I heard" (kai ekousa), 55The audition formula (kai) ēkousa occurs in various prophetic books of the Old Testament (Isa.

6:8; 28:22; Jer. 4:31; 49:14; Eze. 1:24, 28; 2:2; 3:12, 13; Dan. 8:13, 16; 10:9; 12:7, 8) and in Acts 11:7; 22:7; 26:14, plus 27 times in Revelation (e.g., 5:13; 6:3; 7:4; 9:16; 16:5, 7). In the Old Testament prophets and in Revelation hearing is frequently connected to a voice (phone)—Isa. 6:8; Eze. 1:28; 3:12; Dan. 8:16; 10:19: and Rev. 1:10: 4:1: 5:11: 6:1. 6. 7: 8:13: 9:13: 10:4. 8: 12:10: 14:2 (twice). 13; 16:1; 18:4; 19:1, 6; 21:3. The above-mentioned texts in Acts also link hearing to a voice. But even seeing (eidon) and hearing (ēkousa) appear together in Ezekiel 1:28 and Revelation 4:1; 5:11; 6:1, 5; 8:13. Frequently, it looks as if John's Apocalypse surpasses the Old Testament in the usage of vision and audition terminology. "thus says (the Lord)" (tade legei [kyrios]), 56This phrase appears about 400 times in the Old Testament and eight times in the New Testament (Acts 21:11; Rev. 2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14). In almost all the cases it is God that speaks to people through His human agents. The term is found in Isaiah about 34 times (e.g., 19:4); in Jeremiah about 65 times (e.g., Jer. 2:3); in Ezekiel about 130 times (e.g., Eze. 11:7). It occurs in the historic books (e.g., Ex. 4:22; Judg. 6:8; 1 Sam. 2:27; 2 Sam. 7:8; 1 Kings 11:31; 2 Kings 7:1) and in the minor prophets (e.g., Amos 1:6; Mic. 2:3; Hag. 1:2; and about 25 times in Zechariahe.g., 1:3). and references to visions. 57The Greek translations of the Old Testament use horama, horasis, and optasia to describe visions. The term horama occurs frequently in the Old Testament, especially in Daniel (e.g., 1:17; 7:1; 8:2; 10:1), but not in Revelation; in connection with the experiences of Ananias (Acts 9:10, 12), Peter (Acts 10:3, 17, 19; 11:5), and Paul (Acts 16:9, 10; 18:9). Horasis has the meaning "appearance" and "visions." The article is only interested in the second usage. The term is found very frequently in the Old Testament. Visions from God are mentioned, for instance, in Ezekiel 1:1; 8:4; 40:2; Daniel 4:10, 19; 8:1, 15; 10:7, 8, 14, 16; Hosea 12:4; Joel 2:28; Obadiah 1; Nahum 1:1; Habakkuk 2:2, 3. The New Testament counterpart is Revelation 9:17. False visions are also shared (Eze. 13:7; Jer. 14:14). The term optasia appears in Daniel 10:7, 8 (Theodotion) and in Acts 26:19; 2 Corinthians 12:1, where it describes Paul's Damascus experience and visions. dreams, 58Dreams from God are not often mentioned in the New Testament. The term onar is only used in the Matthean birth narrative (Matt. 1:20; 2:12, 13, 19, 22) and in the case of Pilate's wife (Matt. 27:19). The terms enypnion ("dream") and enypviazomai ("to have a dream") occur frequently in the Old Testament. Important texts are Deuteronomy 13:1, 3, 5; Daniel 4:5; 8:2; and Joel 2:28 (English numbering). Joel 2 points to its fulfillment in Acts 2:17, where the term is used again. The dream can be a dangerous alternative to the Lord's message and will. In Jeremiah the dream seems to be consistently an invention of the own heart and in opposition to the revelation of the Lord (Jer. 23:28; 29:8). and sometimes an angelic

guide that accompanies the respective prophet occur. <sup>59Angelic</sup> guides are found in Zechariah 1:9, 13, 14, 19; 2:3; 4:1, 4, 5; 5:5, 10; 6:4, 5; Acts 27:23; and Revelation 1:1;10:9-11; 17:1-3, 7; 19:9, 10 (see context); 21:9, 10; 22:1, 2, 6, 8, 16. In both Old Testament and New Testament the same basic genres of classical prophecy and apocalyptic prophecy are found. Both Testaments have an element of conditionality in the case of classical prophecy (*Jer. 18:7-10*; *Isa. 65*; *Rev. 2:7*). The apocalyptic parts of Daniel and Revelation share many common elements, such as richness in symbols, an interest in the progressive nature of world history, and a cosmic dimension. *GOP 61.1* 

#### **Divine Calling and Recognition by the Community**

Repeatedly the Old Testament reports that prophets have been called by God. Prophets were not mystics striving for the union or fusion with the divine. They were persons that believed in God, followed God's will, and probably wanted to be close to God, yet recognized the chasm between fallen humanity and divine transcendence. <sup>60</sup>Cf. Abraham J. Heschel, The Prophets, II (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 136, 137. They were not striving to become prophets, but were called by God to be prophets and oftentimes trembled when considering the responsibilities associated with their call (*Ex. 3*; *Jer. 1*). *GOP 62.1* 

The Old Testament does not always explicitly state that prophets have received such a specific divine call. In some cases, they just appear on the stage of history and perform their ministry before disappearing again. However, major prophetic figures are depicted as having had a specific encounter with God in which they were appointed and commissioned by God. The list includes people such as Moses (*Ex. 3*), Samuel (*1 Sam. 3*), Nathan (*2 Sam. 7:4*, 5), Isaiah (*Isa. 6*), Jeremiah (*Jer. 1*), Ezekiel (*Eze. 2*), and Amos (*Amos 7:14-17*). There were also those who claimed to have received the word of the Lord. 61See Hos. 1:1; Joel 1:1; Jonah 1:1; Mic. 1:1; Hab. 1:1; Zeph. 1:1; Zech. 1:1; and Mal. 1:1. David knew that God was speaking through him (*2 Sam. 23:2*, *3*). *Obadiah* (1) and Nahum (*1:1*) mentioned visions and a divine message given to them. It can be safely assumed that in one way or another all genuine prophets in

Such a prophetic calling happened also in the New Testament. Examples are persons such as John the Baptist, who was filled with the Holy Spirit before he was born (Luke 1:13-15) 621. Howard Marshall, The Gospel of Luke, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 58, talks about "the prenatal sanctification of John," and continues to say: "Thus in the strongest possible way the divine choice of John for his crucial task is stressed." and predicted to be a prophet by a prophetic utterance of his father (Luke 1:67, 76); Paul, who had his Damascus experience (Acts 9:15-17; 22:14-21; 26:15-18); and John the apostle, who had a specific vision of calling in Revelation 1, <sup>63</sup>Verse 16 with the phrase "the things which you have seen and which I will yet reveal to you" may point to a prophetic dimension of Paul's ministry, David G. Peterson, The Acts of the Apostles, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 667, states that "the additional words 'and will see of me' anticipate further revelations of the Lord's will . . "GOP 62 3

Prophets did not serve themselves but the community. Therefore recognition of the prophetic gift by the community of believers was and is important. According to both Testaments, prophets need to be tested in order for believers to recognize whether or not they are genuine prophets with a divine message. Old Testament and New Testament provide the criteria. 64These criteria include: (1) no materialistic attitude-Micah 3:9-12 (Acts 8:18-21), i.e., prophesying for money; (2) full agreement with the Holy Scriptures—Isaiah 8:19, 20; Deuteronomy 13:1-4; Revelation 22:18, 19; (3) recognition of Jesus Christ as Son of God and Savior who had become fully human—1 John 4:1-3 (1 Peter 1:10, 11); (4) good fruit, i.e., an exemplary conduct of life and an effective ministry—(Daniel 1-6); Matthew 7:15-21; (5) not only proclamation of messages that people like to hear—1 Kings 22:4-8; 2 Timothy 4:2, 3; and (6) fulfillment of predictions—Deuteronomy 18:22. This last criterion must include the possibility that the prophets' statements are conditional in nature or contain conditional elements. See Jon K. Newton. "Holding Prophets Accountable," The Journal of the European Pentecostal Theological Association 30, no. 1 (2010): 70-72. J. K. Newton presents an impressive "Table of Prophetic Criteria in the Bible," showing how the same or similar criteria can be found in both Testaments. His criteria include "Christology," "community," "character," "challenge,"

"consummation (comina true)." "confirmation (supernatural evidence)," "clarity," "content (constructive beneficial)." and "compassion," and "control (protocol)." 65Newton, 65-67. "Clearly not all these criteria would be used in every case, but a prophecy or prophet that failed in any of them would become suspect." 66lbid., 64. In addition to criteria that help to establish whether a person claiming the prophetic gift is a true prophet or a false prophet, God has given the gift of discernment to the community of believers (1 Cor. 12:10) so that the false prophet can be distinguished from the true prophet. GOP 62.4

Again there is continuity between prophecy in the Old Testament and prophecy in the New Testament. "The NT standard for evaluation prophets is comparable to relevant guidelines in the OT." 67Farnell, "Fallible New Testament Prophecy/Prophets?" 175. GOP 63.1

#### The Life of a Prophet

The divine call makes a person a prophet. It deepens and widens the relationship that he or she already has with God. In other words, God brings about a special relationship with the prophet. His or her life is being transformed (1 Sam. 10:6; Gal. 2:20). That does not mean that God forces a person against his or her will to become a prophet. Jonah could still attempt to escape the prophetic task, and Balaam could go against God's message and become the cause for the apostasy in Israel. GOP 63.2

The prophetic ministry can be a burden and a joy at the same time. The prophet has to endure conflict and challenges, as A. Heschel notes: *GOP* 63.3

To be a prophet is both a distinction and an affliction. The mission he performs is distasteful to him and repugnant to others; no reward is promised him and no reward could temper its bitterness. The prophet bears scorn and reproach (*Jer. 15:15*). He is stigmatized as a madman by the contemporaries, and, by some modern scholars, as abnormal. <sup>6868</sup>. Abraham J. Heschel, The Prophets, I (New York: Harper & Row, 1955), 17, 18. *GOP 63.4* 

But it is not only the rejection of the prophetic message by a larger part of the community of faith that causes distress to the prophet, it is also the conflict with false prophets into which the true prophet is drawn (e.g., *Jer.* 23; 28; 29). "As in the OT, conflict is a major theme of prophecy in the New Testament. Jesus warned that false prophets would arise (*Matt.* 7:15; *Mark* 13:22). And Paul engaged in prophetic conflict at least once in his travels (*Acts* 13:6)." First and 2 John are witnesses to the extreme struggle that John had to engage in with the false prophets, called "antichrists." But the struggle with false teachings and false prophecy can be seen in many books of the New Testament (e.g., 2 Peter 2, Jude, 1 Tim. 1:3, 4; 4; 6:3-5, 20). In Revelation 2:20 there is even the symbolic false prophetess Jezebel. GOP 64.1

Yet in spite of conflict, the true prophet can also sing, "Your words were found and I ate them, and Your words became for me a joy and the delight of my heart; for I have been called by Your name, O Lord God of hosts" (*Jer. 15:16*, NASB) and he can exclaim: "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus" (*Rev. 22:20*, NIV)!*GOP 64.2* 

#### Revelation, Inspiration, and Transmission of a Message

Prophecy and divine revelations are closely connected. After the call of a prophet typically God would repeatedly draw close to him or her, having an encounter with the prophet. In such encounters God would reveal Himself to the prophet and would also reveal His will and message. Heschel says perceptively: "It was not Isaiah who produced prophecy; it was prophecy which produced Isaiah." 70. And this is certainly true for all genuine prophets. We mentioned already the prophets' claims to such experiences by the usage of formulas such as "I saw" (Dan. 7:2; Luke 10:18; Rev. 1:17), "I heard" (Isa. 6:8; Acts 11:7; Rev. 1:10); "the word of the Lord came to . . ." (Jer. 1:4), "the hand of the Lord was there upon me/with him" (Eze. 3:22; Luke 1:66). Divine revelations would, for instance, occur in visions and dreams (Num. 12:6: Rev. 4:1) as well as in auditions (1 Sam. 3; Rev. 12:10) or through an angel (Dan. 9:20-23; Luke 1:11, 12; Rev. 19:9). 71Niels Christian Hvidt, "Prophecy and Revelation: A Theological Survey on the Problem of Christian Prophecy," Studia Theologica 52 (1998): 149, 150, describes four models of revelation: 1. "The epiphanic model of revelation," which is "predominantly found in the Bible." He suggests that this

appeared "in the spirituality of Mary Margareth a la Coque." Her revelations "were based on the Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus" (149), 2, "According to the instructive model [of revelation] that has been predominant in the Catholic tradition . . . . revelation primarily has to do with teaching." He mentions Catherine Labouré at Rue de Bac in Paris who received revelation about Mary and was instrumental in spreading the dogma of the Immaculate Conception (149), 3. The "personalistic model of revelation" that "has been predominant after the time of the Lutheran orthodoxy. . . . Here revelation is primarily seen as the relationship between persons" (149). "The personalistic aspects prophecy can be viewed in the writings and spirituality of almost all recognized Christian prophets" (150), 4. "In the historical model, revelation is seen as manifestation of God's action in and through history." He sees this as given in Birgitta of Sweden and Chaterine of Siena, who rebuked three rival popes (150). On pages 152, 153 he list other persons that he believes were proclaiming prophetic messages, such as Julian of Norwich (a woman), Birgitta of Vadstena, Jeanne d'Arc, and Faustina Kowalska. Most of these approaches would redefine what a biblical prophet is and go beyond Scripture by using it in a more general sense. We do not have precise knowledge about the nature of these revelations and "about the frequency with which the various prophets received such extraordinary revelation." 72Gerhard von Rad, The Message of the Prophets (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 46. GOP 64.3

The second phase in the revelation process is that the prophets their audiences these direct transmit and communications from God. 73Cf. Rice, 620. In a certain sense a prophet is a mediator between God and His children, even between God and humanity at large, "the mouthpiece of God." 74Francis D. Nichol, ed., The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald®, 1957), 6:771. In the proclamation of the divine messages—orally, in symbolic actions, or in writing— the prophets were moved by the Holy Spirit, that is, inspired (2 Peter 1:20, 21). 75Heschel, 2:190-205, discusses various rationalistic attempts to explain the phenomenon of prophecy, revelation, and inspiration without recourse to a supernatural source and states: "Owing to a bias against any experience that eludes scientific inquiry, the claim of the prophets to divine inspiration was . . . a priori rejected." David G. Firth and Paul D. Wegner, Presence, Power and Promise: The Role of the Spirit of God in the Old Testament (Downers Grove, III.: IVP Academic, 2011), 176, maintain: "Second Peter 1:20, 21 asserts that no prophecy of Scripture represents a private interpretation of reality, for no (true)

prophecy was 'auto-inspired,' true prophets 'spoked from God as they were borne along by the Holy Spirit' . . ." Typically, they expressed the received truth in their own words, and yet the message was the Word of God. This is also what they claimed with phrases such as "thus says the Lord" (Isa. 43:14). <sup>76</sup>This is also called the "message-formula." See Rolf Rendtorff, " in the Old Testament," in Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, ed. Gerhard Friedrich (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), 6:810. GOP 65.1

A third stage would occur occasionally and can be called inscripturation. The prophet is asked by God to write down his or her message (*Jer.* 36:27, 28; *Rev.* 1:19). God "guided the mind in the selection of what to speak and what to write." <sup>77Ellen G. White, The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press®, 1911), vi. "Inspired revelations were . . . embodied in an inspired book." <sup>78Ibid., v.</sup>GOP 65.2</sup>

The biblical references to this discussion on revelation, inspiration, and transmission reveal that the New Testament is in continuity with the Old Testament regarding the prophetic ministry. *GOP* 65.3

## The Content of the Message

Some scholars see discontinuity between prophecy in the Old Testament and prophecy in the New Testament based on the content or approach taken by each Testament. R. Fisichella claims that the prophecy in the New Testament is very different from prophecy in the Old Testament. He suggests that "in NT prophecy, any kind of fear, judgment, and condemnation has completely disappeared." <sup>79Fisichella, 795.</sup>GOP 65.4

Lastly, setting revelation in the light of prophecy means bringing out its specific content, which is God's compassionate love. Prophecy is never given in the form of condemnation, judgment, or fear; on the contrary, it is always and exclusively a word of encouragement, trust, and hope. <sup>80Fisichella, 796</sup>. *GOP* 65.5

This is supposedly so because of the restoration of the relationship between God and humanity through Jesus' death on the cross. Therefore, before His crucifixion and resurrection words of

However, such an approach raises, for instance, serious questions about the message of Christ to the seven churches in the book of Revelation. There are threats of judgment (Rev. 2:5, 16, 21, 22: 3:16; 14:6-12), judgments through the trumpets and the plagues, the destruction of Babylon, which is a worldwide religious alliance, the condemnation of those holding on to vices (Rev. 21:8; 22:15), and the destruction of evil powers and unbelievers in the lake of fire (Rev. 19:20: 20:11-15). In Galatians 1:8 Paul ascribes to the opponents to his gospel eternal condemnation. In 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12 Paul states that those who do not love the truth will perish. Second Peter 2 and Jude describe false teachers in the church and their fate 81Hvidt, 152, 153, argues against Fisichella, but on the basis of church history, not on the basis of Scripture. The messages of persons that he and maybe the Catholic Church regard as prophetic figures "contain many examples of the seriousness of God's warnings, given the apostasy of his creatures" (153). GOP 66.2

While salvation is strongly affirmed, the consequences of rejecting Jesus and His message are clearly exhibited. Old Testament prophecy also portrays the blessings of salvation and the curses associated with denying the Lordship of God.  $^{82\text{See e.g.}}$ , the book of lsaiah.  $_{GOP}$  66.3

## **Prophecy and Scripture**

As one studies the Gospels with the intention to find out how Jesus reacted to the Word of God of His time, the Old Testament, the following picture emerges: 83In His speeches and conversations Jesus alludes to Old Testament Scriptures almost constantly. However, these conclusions are based on a study of Jesus' use of Old Testament characters, Old Testament narratives and legal material, and Old Testament quotations only. Of specific interest are the introductory formulas to these Old Testament quotations. For a more limited study, see Ekkehardt Mueller, "Jesús y el Pentateuco," in Volviendo a los orígenes: entendiendo el Pentateuco. VI Simposio Bíblico-Teológico Sudamericano, ed. Merling Alomía, Segundo Correa, Víctor Choroco, and Edgard Horna (Lima: Universidad Peruana Unión, 2006), 287-326. Jesus trusted Scripture of His time completely. For Him, the Old

Testament was God's Word. He regarded the prophets as trustworthy messengers of the Word of God. They were inspired by God. Many of their prophecies were fulfilled in Himself. Jesus acknowledged the historical reliability of Scripture and believed that God's will and work can be recognized through Scripture. Biblical teachings are founded on the Old Testament. Furthermore, the Old Testament as the Bible of Jesus' time is the yardstick to evaluate ethical behavior and is the source to justify Jesus' own conduct. Scripture is of practical value. It fosters faith and is a weapon against temptations. *GOP* 66.4

In 2 Peter 1:19-21 Peter takes up the topic again. In this passage the phrase "the prophetic word" (NKJV) seems to be identical with "all prophecy of Scripture" and "prophecy." Obviously these phrases describe the Word of God, at least the entire Old Testament. 84The term prophētikos occurs only in 2 Peter 1:19 ("the prophetic word" [logos]) and in Romans 16:26 ("the prophetic Scriptures" [graphai]). Are these limited to the prophetic part of the Old Testament? We do not think so. Typically, graphe in the singular and plural refers to the Old Testament (John 2:22; 5:39). Romans 16:25, 26 mentions the proclamation of Paul's gospel and the prophetic writings by which the mystery is revealed, namely the person and the ministry of Jesus as the Christ. Romans 16:25, 26 may form an inclusion with Romans 1:1, 2: "the gospel of God which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures" (NKJV). The prophets seem to be the Old Testament prophets in Romans 1:2 and the holy Scriptures the Old Testament. Likewise, the "prophetic writings" in Romans 16:26 seem to represent the Old Testament. In his letter to the Romans, Paul had used quotations from the Pentateuch, 1 Kings, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, and the classical prophets. The summary statement in Romans 16:26 ties them together under the expressive "prophetic writings." There is little doubt that Paul has in mind the entire Old Testament. Cf. Nichol, ed., 6:652; E. Käsemann, An die Römer, Handbuch vum Neuen Testament (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1974), 410. The "prophetic word" of 2 Peter 1:19 seems to be a synonym of the "prophetic writings/Scriptures" as used by Paul. The center of Romans 16:25, 26 as well as of 2 Peter 1:19 is Christ, depicted as mystery in Romans and as morning star in 2 Peter. If this is true, the prophetic word would refer to the Old Testament as do the parallel expressions in 2 Peter 1:20, 21. "The involvement of the Spirit of God in the inspiration of the OT prophets is well known. Second Peter 1:21 gives classic expression to this notion." 85Firth and Wegner, 184.

However, New Testament writings may already and indirectly be included in this statement. The noun graphe ("Scripture") occurs twice in 2 Peter (1:20 and 3:16). The verb grapho ("to write") is also found twice (2 Peter 3:1, 15). We have the prophecy of Scripture (2 Peter 1:20). There is Peter writing his letter (2 Peter 3:1), and Paul has also written letters (verse 15), which are twisted by some, as it is done "with the other Scriptures" (plural of graphe—verse 16). The Pauline letters are at least to some extent equated with Scripture. the Old Testament. They are considered canonical works beside the canon of the Old Testament. G. L. Green emphasizes that early in the life of the church, the concept of "Scripture" was expanded to include the teachings of Jesus (1 Tim. 5:18; cf. Matt. 10:10; Luke 10:7). In the present verse, Peter takes one step further in the development of the canon, calling the writings of the OT "the other Scriptures." Peter here implies that Paul's letters are classified as "Scripture" as well 86Green, 340. Peter H. Davids, The Letters of 2 Peter and Jude, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 307, states: "Whatever the exact delimitations of our author's Scriptures, clearly he is including Paul among them. There is really no other way to interpret the term 'other.' " See also Duane F. Watson and Terrance Callan, First and Second Peter, Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 216: "Here the Letters of Paul are regarded as belonging to the same category as the Jewish Bible . . . "GOP 66.5

Second *Peter 3:2* speaks about the holy prophets and the proclamation of the Lord's commandment through the apostles. If the holy prophets are understood as Old Testament prophets, <sup>87For</sup> a discussion, see Green, <sup>312</sup>, <sup>313</sup>. then we have another passage in 2 Peter that indicates that there is authoritative canonical word beside the Old Testament. <sup>88A</sup> comparison with 2 Peter 1:16-21 indicates that the order apostolic word / prophetic word is reversed. Both seem to be linked, forming a unified testimony. GOP 67.1

For our discussion, it is enough to notice that in 2 Peter the prophetic word is the Old Testament, and yet it includes New Testament authors such as Paul, who was an apostle and had the prophetic gift. This supports the notion of a basic continuity between Old Testament and New Testament prophecy. Farnell supports this conclusion by saying: GOP 68.1

New Testament prophets and prophecy stood in direct line with their Old Testament counterparts who proclaimed God's message and will to the people. Therefore New Testament prophecy is fundamentally a development and continuation of Old Testament prophecy. <sup>89Farnell</sup>, "The Gift of Prophecy," <sup>393</sup>.GOP 68.2

## Summary

While there is some kind of discontinuity between the Old Testament and the New Testament, affecting also prophecy, there is even more evidence for continuity between the gift of prophecy in the Old Testament and the New Testament. The case of basic continuity is supported by similar prophetic figures appearing and similar life experiences of the prophets happening in both Testaments: Old Testament prophecy being integrated in the New Testament: the same vocabulary for the prophetic ministry being used in both Testaments; and the divine call of the prophet and the role of the community of believers being similar. In both the Old Testament and the New Testament, prophets experience divine revelations and inspiration. They transmit their messages to the intended audience. There is similarity in the prophet's messages. Both the written messages of a number of Old Testament prophets and a number of New Testament prophets became the canon of Scripture. GOP 68.3

As Jesus did not abrogate the law, as can be seen in the Sermon on the Mount, and heightened the believers' awareness of its full meaning, so the gift of prophecy continues in New Testament times with a broader focus, a strong emphasis on the life, death, resurrection, and teaching of Jesus, the Messiah. GOP 68.4

# Nature, Role, and Functions of Prophecy/Prophets

When we discussed the prophetic vocabulary and the continuity between Old Testament and New Testament prophets, we already touched on the nature, role, and functions of prophecy/ prophets. In this section we will summarize some of the comments made earlier and address some specific questions. *GOP* 68.5

#### **Commonalities Among the Prophets**

True prophets did not make themselves prophets. They did not use certain techniques to come up with a message for their audience. True prophets were human beings called by God and standing in a special relationship with God. Along with the divine call came giftedness. They received the gift of prophecy. Prophecy is one of the leadership gifts among God's people. *GOP* 68.6

Prophets received divine revelations through which communicated to them propositional truth but also revealed Himself in a personal relationship. The message received from God had to be communicated unadulterated. This happened under divine inspiration, 90F. David Farnell, "When Will the Gift of Prophecy Cease?" Bibliotheca Sacra 150, no. 2 (1993): 179, maintains that "prophecy, reduced to its basic function, is Spirit-inspired utterance based on the direct, miraculous reception of divine revelation." Craig S. Keener, 1-2 Corinthians, The New Cambridge Bible Commentary (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 113, maintains: "Paul apparently defines prophecy as intelligible inspired utterance (normally distinct from the exposition of Scripture, although prophecy often echoed Scripture), the most common sense in the OT and early Christianity." Thomas R. Schreiner, New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 721, defines prophecy "as communicating revelations from God in a spontaneous utterance." The required "spontaneous" reaction may narrow prophecy unnecessarily and may not have enough biblical support. Those who recorded history (e.g., Luke) were also working under inspiration (i.e., guided by the Holy Spirit). Through the prophets God would address His people at a given time and place with a message for that situation, and yet the message would transcend the original situation and would remain relevant for later times. 91Hvidt, 154, claims: "The innermost being of

prophecy thus conceived is an ever-inspired actualization of revelation,adjusted to every particular time in history." Typically, the message of the prophets to the people contained a call to repentance, reformation, and holy living in a close relation with the Lord as well as words of encouragement and hope. <sup>92Heschel, 1:10, brings it to a point by saying: "The prophet is an iconoclast, challenging the apparently holy, revered and awesome. Beliefs cherished as certainties, institutions endowed with supreme sanctity, he exposes as scandalous pretensions." What Heschel says about Old Testament prophets can also be applied to New Testament prophets: *GOP 69.1*</sup>

. . . the purpose of prophecy is to conquer callousness, to change the inner man as well as to revolutionize history. <sup>93Ibid., 17.</sup>GOP 69.2

The prophet's duty is to speak to the people, "whether they hear or refuse to hear." . . . The main vocation of a prophet is "to declare to Jacob his transgression and to Israel his sin" (*Mic.* 3:8) . . . <sup>94lbid.</sup>, <sup>19.</sup>GOP 69.3

The prophet is a watchman (*Hos. 9:8*), a servant (*Amos 3:7*; *Jer. 25:4*; *26:5*), a messenger of God (*Hag. 1:13*), "an assayer and tester" of the people's ways (*Jer. 6:27*, RSV); "whenever you hear a word from My mouth, you shall give them warning from Me" (*Ezek. 3:17*). . . . Yet his true greatness is his ability to hold God and man in a single thought. <sup>95lbid., 20, 21.</sup>*GOP 69.4* 

Prediction is an important element of prophecy—"while others are intoxicated with the here and now, the prophet has a vision of an end"  $^{961\text{bid.}}$ ,  $^{10}$ .—but it is not the only one. The overall message of the prophets covered the past, the present, and the future.  $^{97\text{See}}$  Thomas, 94.  $_{GOP}$  70.1

- . . . the revelation did not have to entail exclusively predictive elements to be miraculous. *GOP 70.2*
- ... The revelatory nature of Paul's message did not involve solely predictive elements but also reception of the true nature of the gospel of Jesus Christ and justification by faith (*Acts* 9:3-6, 20; *Gal.*

1:12, 16-17). 98Farnell, "When Will the Gift of Prophecy Cease?" 175. On page 176 he states: "In John 4:19 the woman at the well perceived Jesus to be a prophet, not on the basis of prediction, but because of His miraculous knowledge of her marital history." See also Leonhard Goppelt, Theology of the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 2:180. GOP 70.3

Prophets would challenge their audiences but also encourage, comfort, and edify them. <sup>99See</sup> George Eldon Ladd, A Theology of the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 353. A good example for prediction, admonishment, and encouragement, even by his own example, is Paul on his stormy journey described in Acts 27, especially verses 22-36. At first glance, the following suggestion by Hvidt seems strange: "Christian prophecy . . . has little to do with the mere prediction of future events. Its energy is never thrust toward the future. *It always aims at the present*. Were it not so, prophecy could not be edifying to the Church in the time of the prophet." <sup>100Hvidt, 150</sup>. In order to understand his point one needs to continue reading: *GOP 70.4* 

It is true that prophecy often looks at the future. It also looks at the past and sometimes its time-focus is on events at the present time. But regardless of whether a given prophecy deals with something pertaining to the past, to the present or to the future, it is always of relevance to the present. <sup>101lbid., 151.</sup> GOP 70.5

In addition, "almost all prophets have focused on the coming of the reign of Christ. <sup>102lbid.</sup> Hvidt may be generally correct that the prophetic message—whether it deals with past, present, or future events—is meaningful and crucial to the audience to which it is addressed. There are a few exceptions, such as parts of the book of Daniel. The prophetic message was supposed to be passed on by the prophet, although it was not or not fully understood by the then-present generation. It was sealed (*Dan. 12:4*). Nevertheless, even in this case God's intention was to speak to the current generation and give these people general insights into His plan and His sovereignty and power. *GOP 70.6* 

While the prophets related to God, they also related to the community of believers. <sup>103Akin, 199, speaks about a "vertical and a"</sup>

horizontal mission" of the prophets. Spiritual gifts, including prophecy, were given for the "common good" (1 Cor. 12:7, ESV) 104Richard Rice. Reign of God: An Introduction to Christian Theology From a Seventh-day Adventist Perspective, 2nd ed.(Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 1997), 217, notes: "In a sense, the gifts are given to the church as a whole, not to individuals within it. . . . We should regard their ability as God's gift to the entire congregation. The purpose of the spiritual gifts is to benefit the church, not to glorify the individual member." and for the harmonious function of the body in unity (verses 12-26). Leadership gifts, including prophecy, are "for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ" (Eph. 4:12, NASB). Prophecy even touches unbelievers (1 Cor. 14:24). "Prophecy delivers the greatest good for unbelievers and Christians alike since it communicates, enlightens, and convicts." 105Garland, 651. For a discussion of the challenging passage of 1 Corinthians 14:22-25, see pages 648-654.GOP 70.7

Part of the prophet's relationship to the community of believers is that the church was asked to check whether or not a prophet was a true prophet and to accept message and messenger, if the prophet was sent by God (1 Thess. 5:20, 21). 106Fisichella, 794, writes on the role of the church: "The prophet, moreover, is recognized as such by the church. . . . It is not the church that bestows the prophetic gift or raises up the prophet. No, the church welcomes both prophecy and the prophet as gift and ministry." Among the tests to be applied was the issue whether or not the prophet's message would correspond with previously given true prophecy. In the case of New Testament prophets, agreement with the Old Testament was the issue. Although people may usually have realized what was genuine prophecy, 107Fisichella, 789, notes: "Unlike the surrounding peoples, who often confused prophecy with magic and ecstatic possession, Israel had a clear religious idea of the prophet." they may not always have accepted its challenges and admonitions. GOP 71 1

#### **Differences Between Prophets**

There were also differences between true prophets, but these differences did not affect their authority and their message. GOP

First, there were gender differences. Many prophets were male, and some were female. Both groups were accepted in both the Old Testament and the New Testament. Even if people would reject their messages, the Bible would still regard these prophets as genuine messengers of God. *GOP 71.3* 

Second, some prophets delivered oral messages only, while others left behind also written material. Some of the written material became books of the Old Testament and New Testament and therefore part of the biblical canon; other messages did not. If inscripturation and canonization did not happen, the reliability of the prophetic message was not affected, and the prophet was not made a second-class prophet. The source of the message was still God. However, the accessibility of their message was more limited for other audiences and later generations. *GOP 71.4* 

Third, the genres of their messages differed. Some prophets wrote historical and legal books, others wisdom literature, others letters to churches and individuals, and still others prophetic literature. Even the prophetic literature came in two major categories, so-called classical prophecy and apocalyptic prophecy, as found in Daniel Revelation 108See Jon Paulien, "The Hermeneutics of Biblical and Apocalyptic," in Understanding Scripture: An Adventist Approach, Biblical Research Institute Studies, vol. 1, ed. George W. Reid (Silver Spring, Md.: Biblical Research Institute, 2006), 248, 249. This means that some prophets developed an outline of human history in broad strokes. from their times to the end, while other focused more on current events and challenges. Dependent on the situation of their audiences some prophets, more than others, may have been called to rebuke, reprimand, and admonish people and call for selfawareness, return to the Lord, and just and merciful behavior. It makes a difference if one has to write to a church such as Smyrna or a church such as Laodicea (Rev. 2:8-11 and 3:14-22). GOP 71.5

Fourth, some prophets may have been more appreciated by their contemporaries and therefore, humanly speaking, may have been more successful than others during their lifetime. At times the people's hearts were hardened, while at other times they were more

open and receptive. That would mean that prophets were sensitive to the religious, political, and social situation of the time they found themselves in. However, while God spoke to the situation, this social- cultural situation did not alter the prophetic message in the sense that the prophet's delivery did not correspond with the divine intention. *GOP 72.1* 

# Prophets as "Congregational Prophets"

Paul's discussion of spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians 12-14 has triggered guite a number of guestions, especially when it comes to the gift of prophecy. We do not need to return to Grudem's distinctions between infallible and fallible prophets. above. 109David E. Garland, 1 Corinthians, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 662, seems to follow Grudem by stating: "The assumption is that the prophets do not speak with unquestionable authority." Rut still people would maintain that prophecy in 1 Corinthians 14 is of a somewhat nature prophecy in different than Testament 110 Siegfried Schatzmann, A Pauline Theology of Charismata (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1989), 39, 40, opposes the view that prophecy in Paul's writings is a continuation of Old Testament prophecy. He does that on the basis of a lack of the messenger formula and the subjection of prophecy to evaluation. and possibly elsewhere in the New Testament. It is congregational prophecy. GOP 72.2

G. Rice seems to react to this view by stating that "the prophets of *1 Corinthians 14:29-33* fit into the category of oral prophets. They are not church members who, stirred by a sermon or hymn, wished to share a thought or two that happened to be impressed upon them." <sup>111Rice, 626.</sup> They would still deliver a message from God. *GOP 72.3* 

First *Corinthians* 14:29-33 is part of the section in 1 Corinthians that deals with spiritual gifts, among them prophecy. In 1 Corinthians 12 various spiritual gifts are listed. Such lists are found also in other Pauline writings (e.g., Romans 12:6-8). Strictly speaking, three lists occur in 1 Corinthians 12 (verses 7-10, verse 28, and verses 29, 30). First Corinthians 13 contrasts the spiritual gifts with true love, while chapter 14 compares the gift of tongues with the gift of prophecy. How should prophecy in this chapter be

Paul uses the word family prophet- 37 times in his writings, 22 times in 1 Corinthians. He applies the term "prophet" to Old Testament prophets (Rom. 1:2, 11:3, 1 Thess. 2:15, Heb. 1:1, 11:32), the prophetic part of the Old Testament (Rom. 3:21), and New Testament prophets (1 Cor. 12:28, 29; 14:29, 32 [twice]; Eph. 2:20; 3:5; 4:11). In Titus 1:12 he mentions a Cretan prophet—one who hailed from the island of Crete, whose inhabitants had gained a reputation for deception. The language indicates that he not only uses the Cretan designation but also describes the situation from the Cretan perspective; not from the Christian perspective. 112See George W. Knight III, The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 298; Donald Guthrie, The Pastoral Epistles, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 200. All the other references to "prophet" reflect the biblical language and concept of a prophet. GOP 73.1

It is interesting that in 1 Corinthians 12:28, 29 and in Ephesians 2:20; 3:5; 4:11 prophets appear with apostles and consistently in the second place of sometimes longer lists. For Paul the prophets belong to the foundation of the church (Eph. 2:20); they have received divine revelation (Eph. 3:5); and they are part of the leadership group of the church that equips the saints for their ministry (Eph. 4:11, 12). The parallelism between 1 Corinthians 12:28-30 and Ephesians 4:11 should be noted: "God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers . . . " (1 Cor. 12:28, ESV) and "He who gave some as apostles, some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers" (Eph. 4:11, NET). The term "prophetic" (Rom. 16:26, NKJV) together with "writings" describes the Old Testament, and "prophecy" 113Rom. 12:6; 1 Cor. 12:10; 13:2, 8; 14:6, 22; 1 Thess. 5:20; 1 Tim. 1:18; 4:14. and "to prophesy" 1141 Cor. 11:4, 5; 13:9; 14:1, 3, 4, 5 (twice), 24, <sup>31, 39.</sup> consistently refer to the prophetic gift in Paul's writings. Paul's treatment of prophecy in the letter to the Ephesians should not be neglected when studying 1 Corinthians 12-14, but should inform the interpretation of the more difficult passage. 115On the other hand, Fisichella, 793, claims: "More careful reading of these texts shows that this

is no mere 'charismatic' interpretation of the church, but rather an actual institutional description of the community as it is. . . . Read without prejudice or preconception, the NT texts lead us therefore to recognize the prophets as an 'institution' (1 Cor. 14:29, 32; 12:28; Rom. 12:6; Eph. 4:11; Acts 11:27; 21:9) and prophecy as a normal . . . liturgical activity granted to certain believers (1 Thess. 5:20; 1 Cor. 14:1, 5, 24, 31, 39)." Hvidt, 157, mentions charismatic and institutional authority GOP 73.2

The Pauline vocabulary indicates that Paul does not differentiate between Old Testament prophets and New Testament prophets, prophets that are foundational to the church and are church leaders and so-called congregational prophets that may function as pastors or preachers of a local congregation or as church members without official role. In addition, the language of the Old Testament and New Testament coincides and seems to favor a gift of prophecy in the New Testament that is in basic continuity with that of the Old Testament. <sup>116See</sup> Farnell, "The Gift of Prophecy," 410. Hilber, 258, concludes: "In summary, OT prophetic phenomena provide an adequate background for understanding the phenomena at Corinth in continuity with the OT prophetic scene." Therefore, it sounds artificial to introduce another type of prophecy in 1 Corinthians 12-14.GOP 73.3

That the prophets in 1 Corinthians 14:29 should be tested is no argument that would support a secondary status of their prophetic ministry, because "even proven Old Testament prophets had their words regularly tested." 117Hilber, 257. Ferdinand Hahn, Theologie des Neuen Testaments, Band 2, zweite Auflage (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 2:277, suggests that for Paul three criteria are important to decide whether prophecy is genuine or not: (1) the analogy of faith (Rom. 12:6); (2) building up the church (1 Cor. 14:26); and (3) love (1 Cor. 12:31). Although prophecy in 1 Corinthians 14:3 is described as encouragement and consolation, the limitation of prophecy to these and similar elements would misunderstand Paul and use an argument from silence. What is not mentioned is not necessarily excluded. "Paul was not defining prophecy but, in context, 'merely uses the fact that prophecy is understandable and therefore results in edification, exhortation, and encouragement.' 118Farnell, "When Will the Gift of Prophecy Cease?" 176. He also states (182) that "edification is better understood as the effect of prophecy on the listener rather than as its content." Hahn, 2:277, holds that

proclamation for the church does not rule out promises regarding the future. "Farnell points out that an understanding of prophecy in 1 Corinthians 14 as congregational prophecy versus apostolic prophecy disregards Ephesians 4:11 and improperly differentiates between Ephesians 2:20; 3:5; and 1 Corinthians 12-14. 119Farnell, "Fallible New Testament Prophecy/Prophets?" 168, 169. GOP 7:3 4

## Prophecy and Ecstasy

The question if prophecy is related to ecstasy is addressed in many publications. In his article on prophecy in the New Testament, G. Friedrich has a section entitled "Ecstasy and Prophecy." Although he states, "There is in the NT no exclusion of the individual ego, no replacement of the human ego by divine, prophetic rapture," he still would allow for ecstasy to occur with prophets in the New Testament, assuming that "the prophecy of John the divine also has ecstatic features." However, moving on to Paul, he claims: GOP 74.1

The prophet is very different in Paul. He certainly receives revelations . . . but he is not characterized by visions and auditions which transport him out of the world. . . . The prophet in the Pauline congregations is not the seer but the recipient and preacher of the Word.  $GOP\ 74.2$ 

He is not one who, possessed by God, has no control over his senses and has to do what the indwelling power orders. Alienation and raving are foreign to him. The primitive Christian prophet is a man of full self-awareness. When he is speaking he can break off if a revelation is given to someone else. When two or three prophets have spoken in the congregation others may remain silent even though something is revealed to them, 1 C. 14:29ff. . . . The responsible personhood of the prophet remains intact even though the whole man with his understanding and will stands under the operation of the Spirit. <sup>120Friedrich, 851</sup>. He also states: "It is not always possible to make a sharp distinction between ecstasy, inspiration by Spirit-possession, and prophetic revelation . . ." GOP 74.3

Friedrich makes a distinction between John as a prophet and

prophets in 1 Corinthians. Although he does not directly provide a definition of ecstasy, his description of the situation in Corinth, which he seems to contrast with John's experience, suggests that he may follow a standard definition of ecstasy, namely, of being in a self-control." 121http://www.merriamand state "bevond reason webster.com/dictionary/ecstasy (accessed Aug. 29, 2014). Ecstasy is among others a religious phenomenon and is found among mystics of religions. Religious ecstasv he self-induced can 122http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religious ecstasy (accessed Aug. 29, 2014): "Trance-like states which are often interpreted as religious ecstasy can be deliberately induced with techniques or ecstatic practices; including, prayer, religious rituals, meditation, breathing exercises, physical exercise, sex, music. dancing, sweating, fasting, thirsting, and psychotropic drugs." A Schimmel describes ecstasy as absolute mono-ideism, links it to mysticism, which is found in all religions, and declares that the mystery of an ecstatic experience cannot be communicated. Heschel adds: <sup>123A</sup>. Schimmel, "Ekstase," in Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart, ed. Kurt Galling (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1958), 2:410-412. Heschel, 2:140, 141 agrees with the last point: "Ecstasy is an experience which is incommunicable. . . . If we examine the accounts and reports delivered by ecstatics, we note that their contribution to positive knowledge is slight. Astonishment has been expressed at the fact that the ecstatics really report nothing new about the divine Being and attributes. The contribution of the ecstatic have to do with the sphere of subjective experience, not with that of objective insight and understanding. Prophecy, on the other hand, is meaningless without expression. . . . The habit of the mystic is to conceal; the mission of the prophet is to reveal." "The prophetic act leaves an utterance behind; ecstasy leaves behind a memory of a moment that cannot be put into words " 124Heschel, 2:142. He continues: GOP 74.4

What is important in mystical acts is that *something happens*; what is important in prophetic acts is that something is said Ecstasy is one-dimensional, there is no distinction between the subject of experience and the experience itself. The person becomes one with the divine. Prophecy is a confrontation. God is God, and man is man; the two may meet, but never merge. There is a fellowship, but never a fusion. <sup>125lbid., 144</sup>·GOP 75.1

H. Ringren's carefully written article about ecstasy and Old

Testament prophecy, in which he occasionally sees some parallels between the Old Testament record and what today would be described as ecstasy, ends with the statement: "There is, however, a fundamental difference: the one believed to be possessed by a spirit usually forgets all about the spirit on awakening, while the OT prophets were fully conscious of the message they received." 126Helmer Ringgren, "Ecstasy," in The Anchor Bible Dictionary, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 2:280. GOP 75.2

Although the Old Testament records the exceptional cases of Saul finding himself among the prophets (1 Sam. 10:5, 6; 19:20-24) some would argue that this was a form of ecstasy, 127Ralph W. Klein, 1 Samuel, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 10 (Waco, Tex.: Word, 1983), 199, <sup>200.</sup> while others would not <sup>128See</sup> David Toshio Tsumura, The First Book of Samuel, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 286, explains: "It is often assumed that this band is of a type whose 'prophesying' was irrational and ecstatic, but the text only suggests the acts of prophesying in a group with musical instrument. . . . But here as in 19:20, it is the work of the spirit of the Lord that is emphasized; no 'pagan' religious actions such as 'self-flagella or mutilation' are mentioned." Those involved could still walk and probably make music. Also this experience did not make Saul a prophet.—a corresponding experience is not mentioned in the New Testament. The prophets in Corinth were able to control themselves and stop speaking (1 Cor. 14:29-32). There is no indication of ecstasy. The same is true for the other New Testament books. Ifjohn would be singled out because of his visionary experiences and his invitation to come to heaven (Rev. 4:1-2; see also Rev. 17:3), Paul should also be added to such a category of prophets (2 Cor. 12:1-4), if it existed. However, it is the same Paul that claims that prophets do not move to an uncontrollable ecstatic stage. And he does this even in the same Corinthian context. While prophets may experience exceptional supernatural phenomena, they are still in their minds and not in a mystic trance or compulsory ecstasy. It may be wiser not to create different categories of substantiated prophets that cannot be with the New Testament. GOP 75.3

Heschel may be right when he writes: GOP 76.1

The theory of ecstasy, in its attempt to make the prophetic act

plausible by making it comparable, deprives us of an understanding of what is genuine and tends to distort the essence of prophecy. . . . It starts, then, with the assumption that the experiences of the prophets are of the same kind as those of the orginatic cults in many primitive societies. <sup>130Heschel</sup>, <sup>2:131</sup>. *GOP* 76.2

A term such as "ecstasy" that we use in common parlance and in the humanities to describe phenomena that we observe in the religious as well as in the nonreligious spheres may not be suitable for use of the experiences of Old Testament and New Testament prophets. It may indeed be a rational attempt to explain the supernatural that is otherwise denied to exist or to have an influence on humanity. *GOP 76.3* 

## The Duration of the Gift of Prophecy in the Church

The question whether the gift of prophecy ceased to exist at the end of the first century A.D. or somewhat later or whether it might still be possible to experience it, is also being discussed. *GOP* 76.4

Farnell subscribes to the following thesis: "With the church firmly established through the ministry of the first-century apostles and New Testament prophets, prophecy passed from the scene." 131Farnell, "When Will the Gift of Prophecy Cease?" 171. He builds strongly on *Ephesians 2:20*, claiming that the foundation of the universal church can be laid only once. As soon as it is laid, prophecy as a component of the foundation is no longer necessary. He claims that "once the church was established, the gift would be discontinued." 132lbid., 189. See his discussion on pages 185-191. GOP 76.5

A second New Testament passage employed is 1 Corinthians 13:8-13, which talks about the cessation of prophecy when perfection comes. Farnell understands perfection as maturity that will go through different stages "until complete maturity is reached at the Second Coming of Christ." A certain level of maturity was reached with the completion of the New Testament canon. So the gift of prophecy ceased. "Thus the gift of prophecy, along with tongues and knowledge, was a temporary gift which is no longer operative today." 133lbid., 195. See also pages 191-195. GOP 77.1

In addition to biblical texts, Farnell uses two theological reasons he believes genuine prophecy has ceased. The first is his understanding that prophecy is miraculous and must be infallible, which he seems to consider as absolutely flawless in every aspect. If this is not given, the phenomenon that we encounter is false prophecy. "It would seem reasonable to contend that no person today who would presently claim the prophetic gift could ever make claims to such an absolutely perfect record of supernatural and miraculous accuracy which is required of true biblical prophets." <sup>134lbid., 200.</sup> Therefore, the gift of prophecy must have ceased. The second argument is an argument from analogy. As the last Old Testament book was written, the gift of prophecy ceased to exist. With the close of the New Testament canon New Testament prophecy came to an end. This is strongly supported by R. Thomas, who is also quoted by Farnell. *GOP 77.2* 

With the completing of the last book of the New Testament, the gift of prophecy became obsolete. A severe penalty is pronounced on anyone who attempts to add to the prophecies of the Apocalypse (*Rev. 22:18*). Since the Book of Revelation covers events occurring from the time John wrote it until the eternal state, any alleged prophecy subsequent to the Book of Revelation is counterfeit. 135Thomas, 95. GOP 77.3

However, as a dispensationalist Thomas turns around and talks about prophecy in the future. "Prophets in the future will minister to the people of Israel and the world at large during the tribulation after the rapture of the church (*Joel 2:28*)." <sup>136lbid.</sup> They are a different kind of prophet because they will not be related to the church, which will no longer be on earth. *GOP 77.4* 

While one may understand Farnell's uneasiness with modern charismatic prophets, his biblical arguments look forced and untenable. 137.Ephesians 2:20 does not discuss the duration of the gift of prophecy, and to conclude that it is crucial only for laying the foundation of the church may limit it too much and miss the intention God has with this gift. The maturity argument (1 Cor. 13:8-13) raises the question why maturity should be linked to the close of the canon and not to any other time in church history. The text does not seem to provide such a temporal marker. In addition, one has to ask what Paul meant when he talked about the teleion and if it should not be

understood in its larger context, 1 Corinthians 15, which discusses the resurrection in the context of Christ's parousia. The argument of the miraculous nature of prophecy, probably based on the concept of inerrancy, is an argument of likelihood. How likely is it that any human being today could claim absolute prophetic accuracy. The question could be raised, how likely was it in the past that such a thing would happen. The last argument as one of analogy is questionable in itself. For instance, a great number of expositors understand 1 Corinthians 13:8-12 in the light of the future resurrection and final transformation, 138See Pheme Perkins, First Corinthians, Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 154, 155. Christ's second coming, 139Ciampa, 656, declares: "The context (esp. v. 12) makes it abundantly clear, however, that the point at which Paul expects the gifts to pass away or disappear is when we see the Lord 'face to face' and 'know [him] fully, even as [we are] fully known.' " the consummation. 140See Ciampa, 653, 655. Garland, 622, 623, writes: " 'The perfect' refers to the state of affairs brought about by the Parousia. . . . Paul uses the verb ἐλθεῖν (elthein) in Gal. 4:4 to refer to the coming of the fullness of time. Here, the battery of future tenses, the disappearance of the partial replaced by the complete, and the reference to knowing as God knows us, all point to the end time. . . . The 'perfect' is shorthand for the consummation of all things." the future world 141 Hans Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, Hermeneia—A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1975), 226. or how else the end of historic time may be described. A. This elton is concerned that in the discussion on the permanence and cessation of spiritual gifts Paul's main point might be overlooked. He seems to attempt to cool down the debate by pointing out that the text should not be over interpreted, 142Anthony C. Thiselton, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), urges: "These verses should not be used as a polemic for either side in this debate. All that is clear is that the gifts cease at the eschaton. It may be natural to assume that they continue up to the eschaton. . . . But the assumption does not become an explicit statement . . ." (1064). GOP 77.5

Those who argue in favor of the permanence of the prophetic gift (and/or all spiritual gifts) may follow two different approaches. One of these approaches seems to be more pragmatic and the other one more biblical. *GOP 78.1* 

Based on the history of the Catholic Church and persons considered to be prophetically gifted, such as Julian of Norwich and Ignatious of Loyola, Fisichella states that "the prophets and the prophetic charism cannot be relegated hastily only to the period of the primitive church, they are always a constituent part of the church and always possess a permanent and irreplaceable significance for the church." <sup>143Fisichella, 795.</sup> GOP 78.2

Hvidt approaches the topic theologically: GOP 78.3

Regarding the preconditions of Christian prophecy one must therefore say that prophecy— in its *material aspects*—can never establish anything new regarding the revelation in Christ, and further that it can never say anything that goes against Scripture. On the other hand— in its formal aspects—prophecy and the prophetic revelations can truly have vast importance for the realization of revelation in history. The innermost being of prophecy thus conceived is an ever-inspired actualisation of revelation, adjusted to every particular time in history. <sup>144</sup>Hvidt, <sup>154</sup>. He also speaks about "the cairological character of prophecy," which means that "prophecy is always. a word for the kairos—for the specific time of the prophet" (156). *GOP 78 4* 

He continues to show that Catholic theologians "used prophetic revelations as evidence of certain explanations of Scripture, when a certain passage of Scripture could be understood in different ways." Well-known theologians such as Bonaventure and Aquinas "used the messages of known prophetic mystics to settle theological disputes about the Spirit's procession from the Father and from the Son, about the veneration of religious pictures and . . . about the theology of the sacraments." <sup>145Hvidt, 155</sup>·GOP 79.1

Typically, Evangelicals and especially Adventists argue directly from Scripture. Discussing *1 Corinthians 13:8-12*, Garland stresses that "Paul does not hint that spiritual gifts will not also endure until the parousia. They too remain in the present time, though they will not continue beyond the end." <sup>146</sup> Garland, <sup>626</sup>. In his *A Pauline Theology of Charismata*, Schatzmann devotes an entire section to the "Permanence or Temporariness of Charismata." <sup>147Schatzmann</sup>,

77-82. He shows that the exegetical basis for the assumption that the spiritual gift faded away with the end of the apostolic time and the completion of the canon is very weak. 148 lbid., 78, states: "It is this writer's view that, given the virtual nonexistence of exegetical support to the contrary, the argument for the temporariness of charismata should be laid ad acta." Having discussed the question if spiritual gifts remain in the church after the close of the canon, Schatzmann turns to a second question, regarding individuals. If an individual has received a specific spiritual gift, will this gift permanently remain with the individual? Looking at Paul himself, he comes to the conclusion that on an individual basis both are true, temporariness and permanence. This would then also influence the church (79). Concluding this section, he argues that "the question of the temporariness or permanence of charismata in the church necessarily remain hypothetical since Paul did not directly address it. There is no textual precedent for the acceptance of the view that charismata, in part, gave way to the canon of Scripture" (80). GOP 79.2

G. Rice argues in favor of the permanence of the spiritual gift, using two texts in 1 Corinthians (1:6, 7; 13:9, 10) and one in Ephesians (4:13). The unity in faith, knowledge of Jesus, and maturity will be realized with Christ's second coming and the first resurrection (1 Cor. 15:53). 149Rice, 617. GOP 79.3

Based on *1 Corinthians 13:8*, *10*, J. Mager comes to the conclusion that prophecy will not cease to exist until the Second Coming prophecy. <sup>150</sup>Johannes Mager, Flamme und Wind: Gabe und Wirken des Heiligen Geistes (Hamburg: Saatkorn-Verlag, 1977). W. Mueller also favors the permanence of prophecy until the end of time. He argues that in their controversies with the Montanists the early church was not able to point to a biblical text about the cessation of prophecy at the end of the first century. Furthermore, he mentioned *1 Corinthians 14:1*, *39*; *1 Thessalonians 5:19-21*, the gift of discernment to help evaluate prophetic claims, discusses *Revelation 22:18*, *19*, and finally points to *Joel 2:28-32* as a promise of prophetic activity for the end of time. <sup>151</sup>Wilhelm Mueller, Der Heilige Geist und die geistlichen Gaben (Hamburg: Advent-Verlag, 1970). GOP 79 4

So how long should the gift of prophecy remain in the church? As correctly mentioned, this question is not directly addressed in Scripture. One has only indirect evidence. Here are some

arguments in favor of the permanence of prophecy until the Second Coming. *GOP* 79.5

- 1. Spiritual gifts are essential for the church to function as a body. Cessation of spiritual gifts would lead to a disintegration of this body of Christ on earth. *GOP 80.1*
- 2. The cessation of only some of the spiritual gifts cannot be demonstrated from Scripture, not even in 1 Corinthians 13. The context points to the parousia and the resurrection as the end of spiritual gifts. That does not mean that all gifts must be present and exercised equally during church history. It is God in His sovereignty who not only determines which gifts individuals will receive but also how frequently and to what extent specific gifts are given. GOP 80.2
- 3. Leadership gifts, including prophecy, that build up the body of Christ (*Eph. 4:11*, *12*) and contribute to the final goal of "unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (verse 13) are needed. While unity, maturity, and fullness have a present dimension, here the coming of Christ is referred to. "The threefold description in v. 13 points to the ultimate destination of God's people on the last day." <sup>152O'Brien, 308. See also 305-308.</sup>GOP 80.3
- 4. Joel's (2:28-31) prediction of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and a revival of the gift of prophesy was partially fulfilled at Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was poured out (*Acts 2:14-21, 32, 33*). However, the great Day of the Lord, mentioned in Joel, is in a special way connected to Christ's second coming. So there should be another fulfillment of Joel's prophecy prior to Christ's return. 153John B. Polhill, Acts, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 110, writes while discussing Acts 2:19: "In any event the signs in v. 19 are standard apocalyptic language and almost certainly refer to the final cosmic events preceding the Parousia." GOP 80.4
- 5. Jesus predicted the coming of false prophets after His ascension and prior to His second coming (*Matt. 24:11*, *24*). However, He did not warn of prophets in general. Obviously the problem would be to distinguish false from true prophets, not the situation that no longer true prophets would be sent by God. In the previous chapter he had

promised to send prophets (Matt. 23:34). Here He warns against false prophets. This reflects well the first-century situation. 154 Cf. Leon Morris, The Gospel According to Matthew, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 600; Charles H. Talbert, Matthew, Paideia Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 266, 267; Craig A. Evans, Matthew, The New Cambridge Bible Commentary (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 404. and this would happen again in the time before His return. As there is a real confrontation between Jesus Christ and the false christs and an imitation of Christ by the false christs, so it can be assumed that believers may have to choose between true and false prophets. The danger is even for believers to be deceived, which makes sense if they have to choose and cannot just reject any prophet. R. T. France suggests that "after all, the reason why false prophets can pass themselves off as 'sheep' is presumably that genuine prophecy is a familiar and welcome phenomenon in the church." 155R. T. France, The Gospel of Matthew, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 290. On page 298 he notes, "The added authority claim implied in what purported to be prophecy (and so received directly from God) made false prophets even more dangerous." See also 916, 917.<sub>GOP</sub> 80,5

# Summary

This section, dealing with the nature, role, and functions of prophecy/prophets, came to the following results: GOP 81.1

- 1. The prophetic ministry has a dual focus or two dimensions, God and fellow humans. Schnelle suggests: "First of all, they [the prophets] interpreted God's past and future saving acts in Jesus Christ (cf. *Acts* 20:23; 21:4; *Eph.* 3:5), revealed the will of the risen Jesus for the church, and gave their testimony for Jesus (cf. *Rev.* 19:10)." Prophets communicate the divine message that they have received to the intended people and call them to repentance and a life with God. Their ministry includes also rebuke, admonition, encouragement, comfort, and presenting hope; but it is not limited to "pastoral" aspects. Typically, elements of predictive prophecy are part of the prophetic ministry so that by pointing to the future kingdom of God prophets would instill hope into their audience. *GOP* 81.2
- 2. Although there is a common denominator between prophets (see section 1 of this summary), there are still differences between them, e.g., in gender, in the scope of their ministry, and in the way audiences are addressed (e.g., literary genres). *GOP 81.3*
- 3. Distinctions between so-called congregational prophets and full-fledged prophets seem to be artificial and should not be made. There seems to be one basic type of prophecy throughout Old Testament and New Testament times. GOP 81.4
- 4. To apply the term "ecstasy" to prophets that receive divine revelations may not do justice to their experience. It triggers false connotations. Definitions of ecstasy vary and are not derived from Scripture. Prophets are conscious of their supernatural experience and are able to communicate their messages, even though it is sometimes difficult to describe heavenly reality with human words. *GOP 81.5*
- 5. There is basic permanence of the prophetic gift that will come to an end only with Christ's second coming, when the indirect communication of the believer with God will be replaced by a face to face encounter. This will make obsolete the gift of prophecy. *GOP*

# The Prophetic Message of the New Testament

## The Prophetic Message in Its Broad Meaning

This brings us to our last point, the prophetic message of the New Testament. It was stressed that prophecy is much broader than mere prediction. It includes exhortation, rebuke, and comfort and is represented in all literary genres of the New Testament. We encounter it in John the Baptist's and Jesus' calls to repent. We find it in Jesus' teaching ministry, in His parables, in the Sermon on the Mount, in His dialogues with friends and adversaries, to name just some. It is continued in the apostles' eyewitness reports and their undertaking of confronting false teachers. Prophecy occurs in the New Testament letters, the theological as well as the paranetic and ethical sections, and even in New Testament narratives. Finally, it is also found in predictions. The entire New Testament is in this sense prophetic word, as is the Old Testament. GOP 81.7

# The Prophetic Message in New Testament Predictions

It seems that the New Testament is not as rich in predictive prophecy as is the Old Testament, with its many "prophetic books" and its threefold division into Law (torah), Prophets (nebiim), and Writings (ketubim). There is only one full "prophetic" book in the New Testament, namely John's Apocalypse. GOP 82.1

Yet at a closer look one finds in the New Testament prophetic announcements of Jesus' death and resurrection, His statements on His coming and the resurrection of humanity, His commission to His disciples, which at the same time was a prediction of the Pentecostal pouring out of the Holy Spirit and the spreading of the gospel (*Acts 1:8*). Throughout the New Testament a strong emphasis on Christ's second coming occurs, already widely found in 1 Thessalonians, one of the first written documents of the New Testament. The future resurrection is described in detail in 1 *Corinthians 15* and 1 *Thessalonians 4*. False teachers are predicted (*Acts 20:29*; 1 *Tim. 4*; 2 *Pet. 2*), as is the man of lawlessness (2 *Thess. 2*). A description of economic trouble and exploitation is mixed with the call to patience on the part of those suffering in the last days (*James 5*). The Day of the Lord and the promise of a new

heaven and a new earth are spelled out in 2 Peter 3.GOP 82.2

These are just a few examples of predictive prophecy in the New Testament. Almost all New Testament writings contain at least some of these predictive elements. Sometimes they refer to individuals in the first century, sometimes to groups of people later, and sometimes to global events. It is important to keep these predictive elements in mind for it seems that today predictive prophecy is not much appreciated, even in mainstream Christian circles. *GOP* 82.3

Yet we have not even mentioned the book of Revelation with its extensive predictive prophecies from the time of John to the very end (*Rev. 1-14*) and its special and detailed focus on the very last events (the plagues, the battle of the religious and political alliances against God's people, the final judgment, and the new heaven and new earth in *Revelation 15-22*). The New Testament is indeed rich even in predictive prophecy. *GOP 82.4* 

But what is it that New Testament prophecy and predictive prophecy want to achieve? GOP 82.5

- 1. Prophecy attempts to focus our attention on God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. It wants to foster and enrich our relationship with the Godhead. *GOP 82.6*
- 2. Prophecy addresses the individual as well as the community. It speaks about personal salvation and a bright future and invites humans to accept it. GOP 82.7
- 3. Prophecy also invites people to love and holy living according to the excellent commandments given to humanity by the Lord. *GOP* 82.8
- 4. The portrayal of future events wants to provide a sense for where we are in world history while we wait for Christ's second coming. Future events are given as a kind of road map but are not in themselves the most important feature. People can get lost in details and discussions of minutiae of apocalyptic prophecy and miss the great picture that Revelation paints. It is about Jesus, the Revelation of Jesus Christ given by God the Father (Rev. 1:1). GOP

- 5. Prophecy points to the Almighty God, to Jesus as the Alpha and Omega, and the Holy Spirit as Spirit of prophecy and reminds humans in everyday life, who really is in control. The Lord of the universe has everything in His hands. He cares for His people. *GOP* 83.1
- 6. Through the motif of the sanctuary prophecy reminds believers that salvation and judgment as well as restoration come from the throne of God, who wants to dwell among His children on earth and dine with them. *GOP* 83.2
- 7. Through the great controversy motif prophecy paints an overall picture of what happened in the past, what is going on just here and now, what will take place in the future, and how not only this earth is affected by sin, suffering, and death but even the universe. The plan of salvation is developed, which portrays God in His love, holiness, and justice, bringing about a new paradise, the glorious kingdom of God without the deadly effects of sin. GOP 83.3
- 8. This prophetic word offers wonderful promises, for instance, access to the tree of life in Paradise regained (Ephesus), the crown of life and protection against the second death (Smyrna), a new name and a personal encounter with Jesus (Pergamum), participation in Jesus' reign (Thy- atira), one's name being secured in the book of life (Sardis), God's name written on the believers while they function as pillars in God's temple (Philadelphia), and participation in Christ's throne (Laodicea). GOP 83.4
- 9. The prophetic word helps God's children to keep going, not to give up, not to lose sight of the final goal, and it fills them with hope and abundant joy. *GOP 83.5*

## Conclusion

Here ends for now the journey to the prophetic voice in the New Testament. Prophecy is widely found in the New Testament. Actually, the entire New Testament has to do with prophecy. Its Author behind the human authors is the Holy Spirit, who uses these human instrumentalities in a supernatural way so as to communicate to them truth about the Godhead, truth that has to do with knowledge about the plan of salvation, and truth regarding practical Christian living. Prophecy is not just given to enhance one's rational abilities and broaden one's horizon, although this is important. It has been given to allow people to live with God on a daily basis. *GOP* 83.6

The prologue of Revelation summarizes well what through the prophetic word God has revealed and given to us in Christ (*Rev. 1:4-7*): (1) We are loved; (2) we have been freed from our sins, redeemed, saved; (3) we have been made God's representatives; and (4) we expect Jesus' soon coming with great joy. *GOP 83.7* 

It is more than worthwhile; it is actually life-changing to listen to the prophetic voice of the Holy Spirit speaking to us through the Scriptures and the prophetic ministry of authentic noncanonical genuine prophets such as Ellen G. White. *GOP 83.8* 

# Chapter 3 - Revelation/Inspiration and the Witness of Scripture

# Angel M. Rodriguez

What the Bible says about itself is as important as the message it contains. The value and particularly the authority of the message are directly dependent on the Bible's self-testimony. This highlights the importance of having a biblically based understanding of revelation and inspiration. Traditionally the word "revelation" has been used to designate the supernatural self-disclosure of God, His will, truth, and plans to a human being called to be a prophet. 1See David A. Pailin. "Revelation." in The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Theology, ed. Alan Richardson and John Bowden (Philadelphia: Westminster,  $^{1983),\ 503.}$  "Inspiration" usually refers to the process by which that information was communicated to others by the prophets in a trustworthy form. These definitions are useful but will need to be examined in the light of Scripture itself. In this study we will summarize some of the biblical evidence on the topic of revelation and inspiration and Ellen G. White's contribution to it, and will conclude with a brief discussion of the phenomena of Scripture itself.GOP 84.1

#### Biblical Evidence

The biblical evidence in support of the inspired nature of the Bible is abundant and has been studied by other Adventist scholars. 3See, e.g., Peter M. van Bemmelen, "Revelation and Inspiration," in Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology, ed. Raoul Dederen (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald®, 2000), 23-45; Fernando Canale, "Revelation and Inspiration," in Understanding Scripture: An Adventist Approach, ed. George W. Reid (Silver Spring, Md.: Biblical Research Institute, 2005), 47-72; Alberto R. Timm, "Divine Accommodation and Cultural Conditioning of the Inspired Writings," Journal for the Adventist Theological Society 19, nos. 1-2 (2008): 161-174. For more bibliographical sources, consult Alberto R. Timm, "A History of Seventh-day Adventist Views on Biblical and Prophetic Inspiration (1844-2000)," Journal of the Adventist Theological Society 10, nos. 1-2 (1999): 486-542. Therefore this study will concentrate on some of the key passages and attempt to provide a summary of the evidence. There are two main biblical passages in which the question of the origin and nature of the Bible are explicitly addressed. <sup>2See</sup> Nigel M. de S. Cameron, "Bible, Inspiration of," in Baker Theological Dictionary of the Bible, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 60, 61. 2 Timothy 3:16 and 2 Peter 1:20, 21. They can be used to establish the parameters within which we can proceed to develop our understanding of the origin and nature of the Bible.GOP 84.2

## Revelation/Inspiration and 2 Timothy 3:16

Paul writes to Timothy about the evil times in which they live and the need to oppose false teachers. He encourages Timothy to oppose them and to retain the true teaching he received because it comes from the sacred writings inspired by God. <sup>4For</sup> further discussions on the context of our passage, see G. W. Knight, The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), <sup>438.</sup> In *2 Timothy 3:16* Paul is mainly interested in the function of the Bible, its usefulness in the church, and in the experience of the believer. Nevertheless, he grounds its function in the nature of Scripture. He *first addresses the object and extent of revelation*. The text plainly states that inspiration is directly located in "all scripture." <sup>5See</sup>, among many others, R. Mayer and C. Brown, "Scripture," in

New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), 3:490; George W. Knight III, Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 445. The word "scripture" (Greek, graphe) is consistently used in the New Testament to refer to biblical literature, the Scripture. In other parts of the New Testament, the singular "scripture" is often used to designate a specific portion of the Old Testament (e.g., Luke 4:21; John 19:37), but there are many cases in which it simply means the Scripture as a whole (e.g., Gal. 3:22; James 4:5). 6See Gottlob Schrenk, "B. Graphē as Holy Scripture," in Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, ed. Gerhard Kittel (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 1:752-755; H. Hübner, "Graphē Scripture," in Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament, ed. Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 1:261; and Benjamin Fiore, The Pastoral Epistles: First Timothy, Second Timothy, Titus (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2007), 171. In 2 Timothy 3:16 "scripture" designates the Holy Scripture, at least the Old In 1 Timothy 5:18 it is employed to introduce a Testament. quotation from the Old Testament. 7William D. Mounce, Pastoral Epistles (Nashville: Nelson, 2000), 565. It has also been suggested that here the use of "all Scripture" includes not only the Old Testament but also "those accounts of the gospel that may have been extant and perhaps also his [Paul's] own and other apostolic writings that have been 'taught by the Spirit' " (Knight III, Pastoral Epistles, 448). In this last case "scripture" designates the totality of the Scripture from which a particular section is being cited GOP 85.1

The suggestion that in 2 *Timothy 3:16* "scripture" refers to the totality of the Scriptures is not only supported by the fact that this is the way the term is used in the New Testament but also by the use of the word "all." "All scripture" could mean "every scripture," that is to say each portion of the Scriptures, or "all/the totality of scripture"; the idea is basically the same. If each individual part of Scripture is inspired, then the totality of it is also inspired. The suggestion that the phrase "every scripture" implies that only some portions of Scripture are inspired is not contextually defensible. <sup>8Mounce, Pastoral</sup> Epistles, 566, comments, "Paul is encouraging Timothy to center his ministry on Scripture because it comes from God and will fully equip him for service. It is out of place within this context to introduce the note of the supposed unreliability of some of the Scripture." *GOP 85.2* 

Second, Paul addresses the connection between inspiration and Scripture. The Greek term Theopneustos, translated as "is inspired," is used only here in the New Testament. It is not a verb but a verbal adjective formed by the combination of two Greek words (theos, "God," and pneo, "breathe") to which a verbal adjective ending was added (tos). It can be translated in two different ways conveying different meanings: (a) "breathing God," that is to say, provoking thoughts about God, filled with the breath of God; or (b) "God-breathed," indicating that Scripture is the result of God's breath. Most commentators accept the second rendering as the proper one in part because of the particular ending attached to the Greek term (tos indicates a passive meaning). 9Ben Witherington III, Letters, 360; Knight, Pastoral Epistles, 446; I. Howard Marshall The Pastoral Epistles (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1999), 793. Towner, Pastoral Epistles, 589, acknowledges that the Greek term "is generally regarded now as passive in the sense of 'God-breathed' (= 'inspired by God')." GOP 85.3

The relationship between this term and the previous phrase "all scripture" is debated by some scholars. Again, there are two possible ways of rendering the relationship in English: (a) "All scripture inspired by God is . . ." or (b) "All scripture is inspired by God." The first one could give the idea that some parts of the Scripture are not inspired, while the second states that all of Scripture is inspired by God. Most scholars have correctly concluded that the Greek word order of the text supports the second translation. 10For more detailed arguments, see, e.g., J.N.D. Kelly, The Pastoral Epistles: 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy and Titus (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1963), 203; Gordon D. Fee, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1984), 279; Knight III, Pastoral Epistles, 446, 447; Marshall, Pastoral Epistles, 792, 793; Mounce, Pastoral Epistles, 566. More important is the context. It suggests, as already indicated, that the apostle has no interest at all in introducing a distinction between what is inspired by God in the Bible and what is not. 11Mounce, Pastoral Epistles, 566. Such distinction is foreign to the New Testament, and this verse does not affirm its validity. GOP 86.1

Third, Paul deals with the meaning of inspiration itself. What does the phrase "all scripture is God- breathed" mean? It means that it was "inspired" by God. The English verb "to inspire" comes from the

Latin *inspirare*, "to blow, to breathe into," and one of its meanings is "to breathe, to blow upon or into." The passage is saying that Scripture is the result of God's breath. It was through God's breath that Adam came into existence (Gen. 2:7) and that the universe was created by God (Ps. 33:6). That same divine creative power was needed to bring Scripture into existence. This means that Scripture is the result of God's wonderful and unfathomable work. This is extremely important in that it makes the Bible unique in nature and authority. God used humans, but the apostle is telling us that Scripture as such cannot be credited to them but to God. Since all of it found its origin in Him, it is endowed with reliability and trustworthiness. The context of the use of the term theopneustos indicates that it refers to "the sacred nature of the Scriptures, their divine origin, and their power to sanctify believers." 12Ceslas Spicq and James D. Ernest, Theological Lexicon of the New Testament (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994), 2:193. GOP 86.2

At this point we can draw two conclusions from the passage. First, the text does not define how the God-breathing took place, or the mode of the divine inspiration. It is obviously a metaphorical expression used to convey clearly the message that God was not only directly involved in the origin of Scripture, but that He was its Creator. Second, the text does not make any distinction between revelation and inspiration. Such distinctions are the result of theological discussions motivated by the desire to establish precise differentiations that supposedly will help us to understand how God related to the human instrument. In the Bible revelation and inspiration are parts of one single process. GOP 86.3

## Revelation/Inspiration and 2 Peter 1:20, 21

Peter provides a little more information about the meaning of the process of revelation/inspiration than 2 *Timothy 3:16*. There are several elements to which we should pay particular attention. First, we need to explore the meaning of the phrase "no prophecy of Scripture." It could give the impression that Peter is specifically referring to the prophetic sections of the Old Testament. It is true that the apostle is discussing the prophetic nature of Scripture, but what he says about its prophetic nature applies to Scripture itself. The context indicates that he is not trying to establish a distinction

between prophecy in Scripture and other types of biblical material. In this case the word "scripture" (*graphe*) clearly refers to the totality of Scripture. *GOP* 87.1

Second, we need to explore the expression "the prophet's own interpretation." The NIV, among others Bible translations, added the noun "prophet"; the Greek reads, "[someone's] own interpretation" (idias epiluseos). There are two ways of reading the passage, illustrated in the following translations: NIV-"No prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation." NASB —"No prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation." Everything hinges on the meaning of idias ("[someone's] own"). 13Peter H. Davids, The Letters of 2 Peter and Jude (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans. <sup>2006), 210.</sup> The second option suggests that the individual as such is not free to interpret the Scriptures. This will be used to support the teaching ministry of the church. <sup>14Ruth</sup> Anne Reese, 2 Peter and Jude (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 145, 146. The first option suggests that Scripture is not the result of, or did not originate out of, the prophet's own interpretation. The "[someone's] own" is contrasted with the Spirit. Is the contrast between the Spirit and the reader or the Spirit and the original writer? Although the introduction of the prophet in the text seems awkward, it appears to be the best option for several reasons. 15See Richard J. Bauckham, Jude and 2 Peter (Waco, Tex.: Word, 1983), 229-232. GOP 87 2

The term *idios* was used in Hellenistic Jewish and early Christian statements as a semi technical term to deny the human origin of prophecy. <sup>16</sup> Ibid., <sup>229, 230.</sup> This would indicate that Peter is discussing the origin of prophecy and not the interpretation of prophecy. Besides, there is no clear instance in which the noun *epilusis* or the verb *epiluein* is used to refer to a human interpretation of Scripture. The closest we come to that meaning is in cases in which the terms are used to refer to God's own interpretation of a revelation He gave the prophet. For instance, in the Greek version both terms are used to refer to the interpretation God gave Joseph about the dreams of the baker and the butler (*Gen. 40:8*; *41:8*, *12*). <sup>17</sup> Ibid., <sup>230, 231.</sup> He provides "a striking pagan parallel, in which a prophetess's unfavorable interpretation of an The emphasis is again on the origin of the prophecy and not on omen is rejected

with the complaint, 'You gave the sign your own interpretation' (su seautē epelusas to sēmeion . . .). This parallel is especially noteworthy in view of the probability that the main motivation of the false teachers which 2 Peter opposes was rationalistic skepticism derived from the pagan Hellenistic environment" (231). its interpretation by the readers. Finally, in the context of our passage Peter is discussing, not the private interpretation of prophecy, but the question of the authenticity of prophecy. <sup>18Michael Green, 2 Peter and Jude (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 101. GOP 87.3</sup>

His theme is the origin and reliability of the Christian teaching about grace, holiness and heaven. The same God whom the apostles heard speak at the transfiguration of Jesus spoke also through the prophets. The argument in verses 20-21 is a consistent and indeed necessary conclusion to the preceding paragraph. Thus, we can rely on the apostolic account of the transfiguration because God spoke. And we can rely on Scripture because behind its human authors God spoke. The prophets did not make up what they wrote. They did not arbitrarily unravel it. <sup>19Ibid. See also Baukham, 232; and Davids, 213. GOP 88.1</sup>

Third, we need to explore the phrase "human will." Second Peter 1:21 is structured in antithetic parallelism in order to emphasize the divine origin of prophecy: "Prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit." The negative clause at the beginning of the verse is expressed in very strong language, as indicated by the construction "(ou . . . pote) not . . . ever, never." 20 Walter Bauer, W. F. Arndt, F. W. Gingrich, and F. W. Danker, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature, rev. and ed. F. W. Danker (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 856. What is denied is that prophecy is the result of a human desire; that it is of human origin. The Greek verb translated "had its origin" is phero, and it means "carry, bring, lead." 21M. Wolter, "Pherō carry, bring, bear; endure; uphold," in Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament, ed. Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 3:418. In this case it indicates that "no prophecy ever issued from human impulse." <sup>221bid.</sup>, 419. One could also render the verb here as "was uttered." GOP 88 2

Fourth, we need to establish the connection between the person and the Spirit. The phrase "from God" indicates that the speaking of the prophets was not self-motivated but that it originated in the divine action (elalesan apo theou, "they spoke from God"). The emphasis here is on the delivery of the message received from God or the moment when it was passed on to others through the human word. In that process the prophets "were carried along by the Holy Spirit." The verb used here is the same one used in the first part of the verse, phero. The idea expressed is that of "being moved/driven" by the power of the Spirit and not by human will. GOP 88.3

The two passages we have briefly studied reveal several important ideas related to the topic of revelation and inspiration. First, they both indicate that in the process of revelation/inspiration God and humans are involved. However, it is clearly stated that the human will was not involved in the creation of the message or in its origin. The role of the prophet is carefully qualified. Apart from receiving the message, the prophets simply "spoke (elalesan), proclaimed, explanations. a n d communicated the expositions interpretations that originated in God as author." 2323. Canale, 49. They obviously spoke in the language they knew. Second, we should notice that except by the phrase "carried by the Spirit," nothing is said in those passages about the way in which the divine and human interaction operated in the revelation/inspiration process. GOP 88.4

It is the task of theology to study Scripture in an attempt to understand its divine-human nature. The passages do not support the view that revelation/inspiration is the means by which God dictates to the prophet what to write. Third, the passages under consideration do not make any distinction between revelation and inspiration. From God's perspective the reception and the delivery of the message are inseparable. Any radical attempt to separate them goes beyond the biblical evidence and creates a false dichotomy. GOP 89.1

Fifth, the delivery of the message—what is traditionally called "inspiration"—was under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, who at that moment was moving, carrying the prophet as he or she was

passing on to others the revelation received. This suggests that the speaking of the prophets, the words they used in verbal or written form, was under the guidance of God. GOP 89.2

#### Other Biblical Evidence

It is evident throughout Scripture that God has spoken to humans through other human beings. The prophets spoke on behalf of God. and He identified their words with His: "I myself will call to account anyone who does not listen to my words that the prophet speaks in my name." (Deut. 18:19, NIV). God used human language as a vehicle of communication. The prophets were His messengers and spoke for Him, as indicated by the use of the phrase "Thus says the Lord." They were fully aware of the fact that the message they proclaimed came from God: "I, even I, will be with your mouth, and teach you what you are to say" (Ex. 4:12, NASB). Notice that the personality of the prophet was not neutralized. What we see is the union of the human and the divine: "I will be with your mouth." God did not overpower the prophets to the point that they were not involved in what was taking place. He was teaching them what they were to say; He was instructing them. And they were commanded to "speak My words to them [to the people]" (Eze. 2:7, NASB). During Jeremiah's call to the prophetic ministry God said to him, "I have put my words in your mouth" (Jer. 1:9, NIV). He has become God's instrument for the reception and proclamation of His message. GOP 89.3

Once the message was received, the prophets were commanded by the Lord to deliver it to the people. Very often they were asked to proclaim it in the form of a sermon or a speech: "The word of the Lord came to me: Go and proclaim in the hearing of Jerusalem . . ." (*Jer. 2:1*, NIV). God's messages required wide distribution, and the prophets were to deliver them to the crowds (*Jer. 22:1*; 26:2). Sometimes God commanded the prophets to write down the revelation, to deliver it in written form. He said to Moses, "Write this on a scroll as something to be remembered" (*Ex. 17:14*, NIV). The message had to be preserved for future use. He commanded Jeremiah saying, "Take a scroll and write on it all the words I have spoken to you concerning Israel, Judah and all the other nations from the time I began speaking to you in the reign of Josiah until

now" (*Jer.* 36:2, NIV). The involvement of the Lord with the prophets did not end with the revelation of His message to them. He was with them during the communication process, making sure that the message was properly expressed and delivered. This is illustrated in an experience of Jeremiah. God gave him a vision and then entered into a conversation with the prophet: *GOP* 89.4

"'What do you see, Jeremiah?' 'I see the branch of an almond tree,' I replied. The Lord said to me, 'You have seen correctly, for I am watching to see that my word is fulfilled.' The word of the Lord came to me again: 'What do you see?' 'I see a pot that is boiling,' I answered. 'It is tilting toward us from the north.' The Lord said to me, 'From the north disaster will be poured out on all who live in the land' " (Jer. 1:11-14, NIV). GOP 90.1

Such dialogues indicate that, among other things, even after giving the vision the Lord was interested in making sure that the prophet was able to deliver the message. The verbal description of the revelation given by the prophets had to correspond to the image or the message they received from the Lord. Word and thought were inseparable. God was involved in the revelation/ inspiration process from beginning to end. *GOP* 90.2

Ellen G. White and Revelation/Inspiration<sup>24On this topic one could consult,</sup> among others, Leslie Hardinge, "Philosophy of Inspiration in the Writings of Ellen G. White," three-part series in Ministry, January 1969, 5-7; February 1969, 32-35; March 1969, 28-30; and P. Gerard Damsteegt, "The Inspiration of the Scripture in the Writings of Ellen G. White," Journal of the Adventist Theological Society 5, no. 1 (1994): 155-179.

The self-testimony of the Scriptures concerning the process of revelation/inspiration is confirmed through the prophetic ministry of Ellen G. White. In her writings she emphasizes thought inspiration in a balanced way assigning to the incarnation of the message in the human word an important role in the process. <sup>25For a useful</sup> discussion of the incarnational model of revelation/inspiration, see Jo Ann Davidson, "The Word Made Flesh: The Inspiration of Scripture," Journal of the Adventist Theological Society 15, no. 1 (Spring 2004): 21-33. She used the idea of thought inspiration to indicate that it is the person, the prophet that is inspired. She wrote: *GOP 90.3* 

It is not the words of the Bible that are inspired, but the men that were inspired. Inspiration acts not on the man's words or his expressions but on the man himself, who, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, is imbued with thoughts. But the words receive the impress of the individual mind. The divine mind is diffused. The divine mind and will is combined with the human mind and will; thus the utterances of the man are the word of God. <sup>26Ellen G. White,</sup> Selected Messages (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald®, 1958), 1:21<sub>GOP</sub> 90.4

She is attempting to describe what occurs when God reaches out and touches human beings to use them as prophets; the mystery of revelation/inspiration. The statement makes some significant contributions. *First*, God addresses the totality of the person and not only one aspect of the personality of the individual (e.g., the oral or written skills). God establishes an interpersonal relationship with a human being at a unique level. Therefore, inspiration should not be restricted to the divine use of a specific skill of the prophets. The mind, the body, the spirit, the emotions, the whole person, is involved in this experience. This is obviously based on the biblical understanding of human nature as an indivisible unity of life. *GOP* 

Second, what she is describing is the mysterious process through which the divine message or word is incarnated into the human condition. The divine mind, she says, "is diffused." And by that she means that the divine mind and will interact or combine with the human mind and will—the divine and the human—in such a unique way that what is expressed by the human instrument ("the utterances of the man") is "the word of God." Obviously the mystery remains, but it is now clear that in the revelation/inspiration process the whole person is an instrument of God as she or he goes through a unique experience. This is what Peter was saying when he stated that men "spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21, NIV). GOP 91.1

*Third*, Ellen G. White is describing an incarnational model of revelation/inspiration. She develops that thought in another place, saying, *GOP 91.2* 

The Bible, with its God-given truths expressed in the language of men, presents a union of the divine and the human. Such a union existed in the nature of Christ, who was the Son of God and the Son of man. Thus it is true of the Bible, as it was of Christ, that "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." *John 1:14*. <sup>27Ellen G.</sup> White, The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press®, 1911), vi. *GOP 91.3* 

The divine thoughts are incarnated not only in the mind of the prophet but particularly in the human language of the prophet. The divine mind and thoughts cannot be placed within the human mind without divine condescension, or without the incarnation of the divine ideas: *GOP 91.4* 

The Lord speaks to human beings in imperfect speech, in order that the degenerate senses, the dull, earthly perception, of earthly beings may comprehend His words. Thus is shown God's condescension. He meets fallen human beings where they are. The Bible, perfect as it is in its simplicity, does not answer to the great ideas of God; for infinite ideas cannot be perfectly embodied in finite vehicles of thought. <sup>28E. G. White, Selected Messages, 1:22.</sup>GOP 91.5

What she seems to be saying is that the divine mind and will approach the human mind and then adjust or adapt His infinite thoughts to the thought patterns and expressions of human beings in order to communicate with us. <sup>29See Canale, 64.</sup> God expresses His divine thoughts in imperfect human speech; a speech damaged by sin. This is the only speech we possess, and God condescends to use it in order to reveal to us His loving character and will. This implies the existence of a correlation, no matter how limited it may be, between divine and human thinking and speaking, based on the fact that we were created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26). The revelation/inspiration process affirms both God's transcendence and His immanence or closeness to us. At times Ellen White emphasizes the element of divine transcendence in order to point to the human dimension of the revelation/inspiration process. The human dimension does not interfere in a negative way with the trustworthiness of the divine message. 30"God has been pleased to communicate His truth to the world by human agencies, and He Himself, by His Holy Spirit, qualified men and enabled them to do this work. He guided the mind in the selection of what to speak and what to write. The treasure was entrusted to earthen vessels, yet it is, nonetheless, from Heaven. The testimony is conveyed through the imperfect expression of human language, yet it is the testimony of God; and the obedient, believing child of God beholds in it the glory of a divine power, full of grace and truth" (E. G. White, The Great Controversy, vi, vii) 91.6

Fourth, Ellen G. White clearly states that the words of the prophets are not inspired; yet she does not radically separate the receiving and the delivering of the message from the revelation/ inspiration process. She indicates that the words used by the prophets were not given or dictated to them from the divine language or vocabulary. <sup>31</sup>"The Bible is written by inspired men, but it is not God's mode of thought and expression. It is that of humanity. God, as a writer, is not represented. Men will often say such an expression is not like God. But God has not put Himself in words, in logic, in rhetoric, on trial in the Bible. The writers of the Bible were God's penmen, not His pen. Look at the different writers" (E. G. White, Selected Messages, 1:21). She distinguishes two moments within the revelation/inspiration process, namely, the receiving and the writing down of the revelation. In the first, God is directly involved in a unique way in passing on the message to the prophet. In the

second, the prophet is working in order to pass on the message to the people. At that moment, she says, "The words I employ in describing what I have seen are my own, unless they be those spoken to me by an angel, which I always enclose in marks of quotation " 321bid., 37. In the Bible we also find occasions God spoke directly to His servants, e.g., the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20). In many of the revelatory auditions we find in the Old Testament the Lord directly spoke to the prophets. Having said that, we should make clear that nowhere does Ellen G. White say that the words the biblical writers used were dictated by the Spirit. She uses the phrase "dictated by the Holy Spirit" in connection to the Scripture (Ellen G. White, Testimonies for the Church [Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press®, 1948], 4:9; idem, Spiritual Gifts [Battle Creek, Mich.: James White, 1858], 1:176), but in such cases she is not referring to the words used by the biblical writers. She uses it to indicate that they wrote messages of truth, what she calls "literal truth," under the command, order, and power of the Spirit. As true prophets, they did not control the content of the revelation they received. In other words, the phrase is used to point to "the divine origin of the Bible" (idem, Spiritual Gifts, 1:176), and not to a dictation theory of inspiration. Obviously that does not mean that the prophets were left to themselves when communicating the message in oral or written form. She describes her own experience by saying, "I am just as dependent upon the Spirit of the Lord in relating or writing the vision as in having the vision." 33E. G. White, Selected Messages, 1:36. This dependence on the Spirit from the beginning of the experience to its end clearly indicates that the communication of the message to others is part of the revelation/inspiration process. <sup>34Canale, 58.</sup> The words used by the prophets are not inspired in the sense that they are not the words of God per se but the human words within which the divine word has been incarnated. This at least means that the Spirit guided the prophets in the writing process in the sense that the He made sure they used their own vocabulary to the best of their abilities to express in a trustworthy and reliable form the message they received. 35Ellen G. White suggests that possibility when she comments that there were times her pen hesitated a moment concerning how to express herself and then "the appropriate words" came to her mind (Ellen G. White, Mind, Character, and Personality [Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald®, 2001], 1:318). The Lord was helping her to use her own vocabulary in the best possible way. She was fully aware of this phenomenon: "Although I am as dependent upon the Spirit of the Lord in writing my views as I am in receiving them, yet the words I employ in describing what I

have seen are my own, unless they be those spoken to me by an angel, which I always enclose in marks of quotation" (idem, Selected Messages, 1:37). In such a search for precision the prophets, under the guidance of the Spirit, may have revisited or edited their own writings in order to clarify, enlarge, or adapt to new situations the content of the message received. <sup>36</sup>Perhaps one of the best biblical examples of this practice is found in the two passages containing the Sabbath commandment, namely, Exodus 20:8-11 and Deuteronomy 5:12-14. A comparison of the two would reveal some minor as well as significant changes that enrich the theological significance of the commandment (see Ekkehardt Mueller, "Sabbath Commandment in Deuteronomy 5:12-15," Journal of the Adventist Theological Society 14, no. 1 [2003]: 141-149).

# The Phenomena of Scripture and Inspiration

So far we have examined what the Scripture says about itself and the contribution of the writings of E. G. White to the topic of revelation/inspiration. Some prefer to define the doctrine of revelation/inspiration *primarily* on the basis of the phenomena of Scripture (the characteristics of the Bible), that is to say, their approach is inductive. <sup>37On</sup> this topic, see Ekkehardt Mueller, "The Revelation, Inspiration, and Authority of the Scripture," Ministry, April 2000, 21-<sup>25.</sup> They concentrate on what they consider to be the human aspect of Scripture, the apparent mistakes and the strong presence of cultural elements in the biblical text, and conclude that the divine element is found behind the text itself (e.g., in the thoughts inspired by God or in the values that the text promotes). Any other information found in the Bible is suspect. *GOP* 93.1

We began with the self-testimony of Scripture concerning its nature, and we formulated our understanding of revelation/inspiration on the basis of those claims. However, we cannot ignore the phenomena of Scripture, what we find there as we read it. We need to take into consideration both elements without making the phenomena our primary source of information for defining the revelation/inspiration process. <sup>381bid., 22.</sup> It is important to deal with the fact that in the Bible we do find some minor discrepancies and difficulties. Since those elements are found in the Scripture as we have received it. we must acknowledge that revelation/inspiration process does not always exclude them. That being the case, we need to examine the phenomena of Scripture in order to determine whether or not, or to what extent, they impact our understanding of the revelation/inspiration of the Bible as defined by Scripture itself. 391t could be suggested that the presence of discrepancies belong to the realm of biblical hermeneutics and not to the doctrine of revelation/inspiration. But wherever we assign them for analysis, we will argue that they should not. be used to identify and distinguish between what is inspired and what is not inspired in the Bible. It would appear that "the human and the divine in Scripture are not complementary. They are integrated" (ibid., 24). 93.2

# The Prophets' Use of Sources

We saw that the Scripture finds its origin in God, but we also know that biblical writers occasionally used documents or did research when writing their books. This is what we find in the Bible itself. For instance. Luke clearly states that he did research in writing his Gospel and that it was his intention to write "an orderly account" (Luke 1:3, NIV). We could suggest that God, through the Spirit, was quiding him in the selection of the materials and that He was appropriating the information in order to make it part of His revealed will for us 40This has been called "the Lucan model of inspiration, i.e., the Spirit guided the mind of the Gospel writers in the selection of materials to write" (George E. Rice, Luke, a Plagiarist? Is a Writer Who Copied From Others Inspired (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press®, 1983), 26; also Juan Carlos Viera, The Voice of the Spirit (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press®, 1998), who prefers to call it "the historical model." This means that "God inspires prophets to search for historical records, oral or written, and quides them in making the correct selection" (60). For an evaluation of the different models of inspiration and for good insights on the topic, see Alberto R. Timm, "Understanding Inspiration: The Symphonic and Wholistic Nature of Scripture," Ministry, August 1999, 12-15. WA may even say that Luke, using the language of 2 Peter 1:21, was "carried along by the Holy Spirit" (NIV) as he examined the evidence, selected from it, and organized it, GOP 94.1

Another good example of this phenomenon is found in Proverbs. This book is a collection of sayings written by different composers (*Prov. 1:1*; *10:1*; *25:1*; *30:1*; *31:1*). Two of the collections may have been written by non-Israelites (Agur, Prov. 30; the mother of King Lemuel, *Prov. 31*; cf. *Prov. 30:9*). These two collections contain useful sayings fully compatible with the ideological purpose of the biblical writer. Since we do not have the original compositions, it is impossible to determine if the inspired writer edited the segments in any way before incorporating them into the book. Fortunately, we possess several biblical cases in which the original documents used by the biblical writer are available to us. *GOP 94.2* 

# "Instruction of Amenemope" and Proverbs

The first case is found in Proverbs 22:17-24:22, a section usually called "Words to the Wise." It has been claimed that in this passage we have some material taken from an Egyptian wisdom document called "The Instruction of Amenemope." When a copy of this document was found in Egypt, scholars soon realized that there were many parallels between its content and that specific section of Proverbs. The basic issue was how to explain the literary similarities. The document was dated to around 1188-945 B.C., opening up the possibility that the biblical text, composed by Solomon (reigned 971-931 B.C.), may have influenced the Egyptian one. But today even conservative scholars tend to acknowledge that if there was a literary dependence or influence, it was from "Amenemope" to Proverbs. 41E.g., David H. Hubbard, The Communicator's Commentary: Proverbs (Dallas: Word, 1989), 29, 30; Paul E. Koptak, Proverbs (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 532, 533; Bruce K. Waltke, The Book of Proverbs Chapters 1-15 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 21-24; Ruffle, "Teaching," 62; John H. Walton, Ancient Israelite Literature in Its Cultural Context (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1989), 197; and Andrew E. Steinmann, Proverbs (St. Louis: Concordia, 2009), 448. The Instruction itself is now dated to the Twentieth Dynasty (1200-1081). <sup>42Hans-W.</sup> Fischer-Elfert, "Instructions of Amenemope," in The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt, ed. Donald B. Redford (New York: Oxford, 2001), 2:171. GOP 04.3

The use of "Amenemope" by Proverbs should not surprise us (see 1 Kings 4:29, 30). "The Instruction of Amenemope," consisting of 30 chapters, belongs to the wisdom literature, and its content is in general good, very similar to biblical wisdom literature. Some of the main emphases in the Instruction are the relationship between the individual and the gods, wealth, and personal relations. Here are a few of the parallels between the two documents. GOP 95.1

Some of the Parallels Between Proverbs and "Amenemope" 43The text is quoted from Miriam Lichtheim, "Instruction of Amenemope," in The Context of Scripture I: Canonical Compositions From the Biblical World, ed. William W. Hallo (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 115-122. The parallels I am using are based on Fox, Proverbs 10-31, 757-760. He lists other parallels.

## "Amenemope"

## **Proverbs**

I:5, 6 Knowing how to answer one 22:21 Teaching you true and reliable who speaks to reply to one who words, so that you can give sound sends a message answers to him who sent you

III.9 Give ears, hear the sayings 22:17 Pay attention and listen to the sayings

III.10 Give your heart to 22:17 Apply your heart to what I teach understand them

XXVII.6 Look at this thirty chapters 22:20 Have I not written thirty sayings\* for you . . . ? [NIV]

IV.4 Beware of robbing a wretch 22:22 Do not rob the poor because he is poor[NASB]

IV.19 It is the Moon who declares 22:23 For the Lord will plead their case his crime and take the life of those who rob them

XI.12 Do not befriend the heated 22:24 Do not associate with a man man nor approach him for given to anger; or go with a hot-conversation tempered man

VII.11 Do not move the markers 22:28 Do not move the ancient on the borders of fields boundary

XXVII.16, 17 The scribe who is 22:29 Do you see a man skilled in his skilled in his office he is found work? He will stand before kings.

XXIII.12 Do not eat in the 23:1 When you sit to dine with a ruler presence of an official

XXIII.17 Look at the bowl that is23:1 consider carefully what is before before you.

X.4, 5 They made themselves 23:5 They will surely sprout wings and wings like geese and flew away to fly off to the sky like an eagle.

There are many other similarities, but this sample is enough to make the point. They could probably be explained in several ways but the fact that they are concentrated in a particular section of Proverbs suggests that there is a literary connection between the two. 44It has been demonstrated that the structure of "Amenemope" influenced the biblical writer in the selection of materials. The tendency was to select sayings placed at the beginning and/or at the end of some of the chapters from "Amenemope." This means that in Proverbs the main topic of a chapter from the Egyptian document was simply summarized. See Paul Overland, "Structure in The Wisdom of Amenemope and Proverbs," in "Go to the Land I Will Show You":

Studies in Honor of Dwight W. Young, ed. Joseph E. Coleson and Victor H. Matthews (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1996), 280-291, who concludes that "the Israelite sage was sensitive to that structure [the structure of "Amenemope"] and made use of it as he sought to distill foreign material for the benefit of an Israelite audience" (291). If we accept that Proverbs was influenced by "Amenemope," as it seems to me to be the case, the following comments are in order. First, the biblical writer was not simply copying from the Egyptian document but selecting passages from different parts of the original and placing them where he saw it fit. In other words, "he exercised full autonomy over presentation of the foreign material that he deemed worthy of transmission." 45Overland, <sup>286.</sup> 45 Second, he adjusted the material to his own Israelite cultural setting. For instance, instead of keeping the reference to the geese, found in "Amenemope," he used the eagle, which was much more common in Israel 461bid., 288. Another example would be the reference to "the gate" of the city not found in the Egyptian text. In both cases the topic is respect for the defenseless, but "the legal setting in the gate presents an expression that is appropriate for Israelite culture and that does not appear in Amenemope" (ibid., 284). Third, he also eliminated any reference to the Egyptian god Toth and, instead, used the name of the Lord. Fourth, in some cases he expanded the savings or shortened them and in others cases he practically quoted verbatim or used the same illustrations. In other words, he reshaped the materials according to his own purpose and guided by the Spirit. 47Fox, 765. GOP 96.1

Finally, there does not appear to be a significant ideological shift from the meaning of the original saying to the way Proverbs used it. Nevertheless, there are two important changes that we should notice. The most significant one is the elimination of the name of Egyptian deities from the biblical text. <sup>48lbid., 766, 767.</sup> For instance, instead of the Egyptian god Moon we find, as expected, a reference to the Lord. The second shift consists in placing the content of the material within the Israelite covenant faith. For example, the reason given for not exploiting the poor flows from the covenant relation: <sup>49Hubbard, 30.</sup> "For the Lord will take up their case and will plunder those who plundered them" (*Prov. 22:23*). One could conclude that the Egyptian material "has been so refined by Israel's faith, that whatever its origin, it belongs to the OT revelation." <sup>50D. A. Hubbard,</sup>

"Proverbs," New Bible Dictionary, ed. J. D. Douglas, N. Hillyer, and D.R.W. Wood (Downers Grove, Ill.:Intervarsity, 1996), 977. Based on the biblical view of revelation/inspiration, we would suggest that the whole process of selection and adaptation took place under the direct guidance of the Spirit and consequently information that originally was not the result of divine inspiration is now part of the inspired Word of God.*GOP* 96.2

#### Paul and Aratus

Scholars agree that in his speech on the Areopagus in Athens. Paul quotes from the Stoic Aratus of Cilicia (c. 315-240 B.C.). 51Clement of Alexandria (c. 150-215) acknowledged that that the quote came from Aratus (Stromateis 1.19.91). Probably his best known poem is Phaenomena, from which he is quoted in the sermon. The poem became famous and achieved "lasting popularity beyond the circle of the learned poets; it became the most widely read poem, after the Iliad and Odyssey, in the ancient world." 52G. J. Toomer, "Aratus," in The Oxford Classical Dictionary, ed. Simon Hornblower and Antony Spawforth (New York: Oxford, 2003), 136. The section of the poem quoted reads, "We are his offspring" (Acts 17:28, NIV). 53The Greek is exactly the same in both the poem of Aratus (Phaenomena 5) and in Acts (Tou gar kai genos esmen). Mark J. Edwards has suggested that Luke was acquainted with the poem through the work of a Jewish writer called Aristobulus (2nd century B.C.), who in his writings ("Quoting Aratus: Acts 17:28." Zeitschrift für poem neutestamentliche Wissenschaft 83 [1992]: 266-269). This is possible but speculative. In order to create a bridge between him and his listeners, Paul makes clear that he is quoting from one of their poets. The pronoun "his" refers in the poem of Aratus to the Greek god Zeus, understood in a pantheistic way. 54"For the Stoics 'Zeus' meant not the supreme god in Greek polytheism but the Logos (Reason . . . )" (I. Howard Marshall, Acts: An Introduction and Commentary [Downers Grove, III.: InterVarsity, 1980], 306). Therefore the idea expressed by the poet is basically pantheistic: 55See C. K. Barrett, Acts 15-28, International Critical Commentary (New York: T. & T. Clark, 1998), 848. We all possess the divine in us. In the sermon Paul imbues the quote with Christian meaning. Now "God" is referring to the Father of Jesus, the Creator, and the idea of pantheism is totally absent. We were all created by

God from one man (verse 26). What Paul is probably doing is taking "the Greek idea of the 'spark of the divine being' in us as tied to Zeus and speaks of being made as God's children by the Creator. alluding to our being made in God's image." 56Darrell L. Bock, Acts (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 568. See also F. F. Bruce, Commentary on the Book of Acts (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1954), writes, "We are, then, the offspring of God, says Paul: not, of course, in the pantheistic sense intended by the Stoic poets, but in the sense of the Biblical doctrine of man, as a being created by God in His mage and after His likeness" (360). See also Marshall, Acts, 306; and Barrett, Acts 15-28, 848. He is in fact using "the words to fit teaching." 57Simon J. Kistemaker, New Testament his Christian Commentary: Exposition of the Acts of the Apostles (Grand Rapids: Baker, <sup>1990), 636.</sup> Here the apostle, under the guidance of the Spirit and for a missiological purpose, uses some of his knowledge of Greek literature to express a divine message. Divine inspiration is operative at that level in the selection of the information. 58The use of sources by biblical writers is also found in the prophetic experience of Ellen G. White. GOP 97.1

#### Jude and the Book of Enoch

The short Epistle of Jude is basically an attempt to counter the influence of false teachers in the community of believers (verses 3. 4). Jude stresses in a particular way the judgment of God against them. He supports his argument quoting a prophecy of Enoch. 59Some New Testament writers occasionally used extracanonical sources. See Michael Green, 66, 67; Gene Green, Jude, 26-33. Interestingly, the same was done by Ellen G. White. See Denis Fortin, "Apocrypha, Ellen G. White's Use of the," The Ellen G. White Encyclopedia, ed. Denis Fortin and Jerry Moon (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald®, 2013), 605, 606; and Tim Crosby, "Does Inspiration Mean Original?" Ministry, February 1986, 4-7, for more examples found in the Bible and in the writings of Ellen G. White. An interesting biblical case, mentioned by Crosby, is the parallel between Revelation 6:9-11 and 2 Ezra 4:35-37. John is describing a vision he had and yet the language is very close to what we find in 2 Ezra: "Have not the souls of the righteous inquired about these things, saying, How long must we stay here? And when will the crop of our reward upon the threshing floor come? Then Jeremiel, the archangel, replied to them as follows: When the number of those like you is full" (Jacob M. Myers, I & II Esdras: New Translation With Introduction and Commentary [Garden City, N.Y.:

Doubleday, 1974], 165). In contrast to Ezra, John does not speak about the souls of the righteous in their chambers, but about the souls under the altar, thus giving to the term "soul" a symbolic meaning that rules out the idea of the immortality of the soul. For further discussion on possible parallels to Revelation 6:9-11, see David E. Aune, Revelation 6-16 (Dallas: Word, 1998), 406-409. The prophecy is not found in the Old Testament but is found in a Jewish extracanonical book called 1 Enoch. This book contains materials composed between the fourth century B.C. and the beginning of the Christian Era. 60See, George W. Nickelsburg, "Enoch, First Book of," in Anchor Bible Dictionary, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 2:508. Jude introduces the quote, saying, "Enoch, the seventh from Adam prophesied about these men." He is applying what Enoch said to the situation the church is facing in his days. Here is the prophecy: *GOP 98.1* 

Jude (NIV)GOP 98.2

"See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones to judge everyone, and to convict all of them of all the ungodly acts they have committed in their ungodliness, and of all the defiant words ungodly sinners have spoken against him" (verses 14, 15). GOP 98.3

1 Enoch 1:9<sup>61I</sup> will use the translation of the Ethiopic version provided by R. H. Charles, The Apocrypha and the Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), 2:189. $_{GOP}$  98.4

"And behold! He cometh with ten thousands of His holy ones to execute judgment upon all, and to destroy all the ungodly: and to convict all flesh of all the works of their ungodliness which they have ungodly committed, and of all the hard things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him." GOP 98.5

Jude quotes the passage to establish that the Lord will come to judge the deeds and words of the false teachers. He emphasizes their bad deeds (verse 16). There are several things that we should state concerning the quote. First, its content is biblical. The text is describing an apparition of God (a theophany) in which He is accompanied by a myriad of holy ones (angels). This idea derives from *Deuteronomy* 33:2 and, in the context of judgment, is also

found in *Daniel 7:10*, *18*, *22*, *25*. The language used to connote the universality of the judgment is similar to what we find in *Jeremiah 25:30*, *31* and *Isaiah 66:15*, *16*. The language about the corruption of all flesh seems to echo the language used in *Genesis 6-9*. 62These biblical parallels have been taken from George W. Nickelsburg, 1 Enoch 1: A Commentary of the Book of 1 Enoch, Chapters 1-36; 81-108 (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2001), 149. In other words, the ideas contained in the prophecy from Enoch are found in the biblical canon and are, therefore, of a prophetic nature. *GOP 98.6* 

Second, Jude is obviously adapting the quote to his own purpose. He understands the coming of God (the theophany) to refer to the return of Christ accompanied by the angels. 63See Michael Green, 2 Peter and Jude: An Introduction and Commentary (Downers Grove, III.: IVP Academic, 1987), 205. One cannot totally exclude the possibility that Jude may have thought that the book in fact preserved a prophecy from Enoch. The wicked ones include in a particular way the false teachers, while in Enoch they are the wicked of the earth. Third, it would appear that Jude uses the quote because he found in it an excellent articulation of the ideas he wanted to convey to the Christian community to which he was writing. He modified it a little, but retained its biblical content. Fourth, he most probably attributed the prophecy to Enoch because the document he was quoting from assigned it to him. This document was well known and respected among Jews and Jewish Christians. 64Isaac, "1 Enoch," 8. Nickelsburg, "Enoch," 516 thus providing another good reason for Jude to quote from it. 65Cf. Douglas J. Moo, 2 Peter and Jude (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 273. Nevertheless, 1 Fnoch 66In contrast to Ezra, John does not speak about the souls of the righteous in their chambers, but about the souls under the altar, thus giving to the term "soul" a symbolic meaning that rules out the idea of the immortality of the soul. never reached canonical status. What is important is that a text from a document claiming to contain a specific prophecy from Enoch is now, under divine inspiration, selected by the prophet and placed at the service of Christian doctrine. GOP 99.1

# **Incidental Discrepancies**

When we read the Bible as it has come to us, we find some discrepancies or apparent discrepancies that are not detrimental to the divine inspiration of the Bible and that in most cases can be readily explained. Take, for instance, the case of large numbers in the historical books of the Bible. A few examples will illustrate the issue at hand. According to 1 Chronicles 19:18, David defeated the Arameans, killing 7,000 charioteers and 40,000 foot soldiers. In 2 Samuel 10:18 the numbers given are 700 charioteers and 40.000 horsemen. In 1 Kings 4:26 we are told that Solomon had 40,000 stalls of horses, while in 2 Chronicles 9:25 we read that he had 4,000 stalls. In 2 Kings 24:8 Jehoiachin was 18 years old when he became king, but in 2 Chronicles 36:9 the age given is 8 years. 67For a complete list of apparent discrepancies in 1, 2 Chronicles, see John Barton, "1, 2 Chronicles," in Expositor's. Bible Commentary, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988), 4:561. There are several ways of dealing with these discrepancies in order to harmonize them. The most common way, offered by conservative theologians, is to treat these as transcriptional errors made by the scribes. 68The best analysis of the biblical materials is still found in J. Barton Payne, "The Validity of the Numbers in Chronicles," Bibliotheca Sacra 136 (1979): 109-128, 206-220.<sub>GOP</sub> 99.2

We can also postulate that some of the numbers were simply taken from the sources used by the biblical writer. We do know that the author of Chronicles used several sources, and a number of them are mentioned in the text. For instance, reference is made to "the account of the chronicles of King David" (1 Chron. 27:24, NKJV) and "the book of the kings of Judah and Israel" (2 Chron. 25:26, NKJV). These are most probably court records to which the biblical writer had access and from which information was obtained in the composition of the biblical book. Perhaps it would be appropriate to conclude that in some of the cases dealing with numbers and the use of different names for the same person the biblical writer was following the sources used. In a sense this is similar to cases in which, because of what appears to be a slip of memory, a biblical writer assigns a particular quote to the wrong person (Matthew 27:9; the quote is not from Jeremiah but from Zechariah 11:12, 13). 69It has been suggested that Matthew had in mind both Jeremiah and Zechariah

and combined ideas found in both books (see Walter Kaiser, Jr., Peter H. Davis, F. F. Bruce, and Manfred T. Brauch, Hard Sayings of the Bible [Downers Grove, III.: InterVarsity, 1996], 399, 400), but the fact remains that he credited the statement to Jeremiah. These inconsequential discrepancies are not biblical understanding incompatible with the of revelation/inspiration, because they do not undermine the reliability and trustworthiness of the Scriptures. Perhaps the most we can say is that since in the revelation/inspiration process the guidance of the Holy Spirit respected human modes of thinking and writing, we should not expect to find in Scripture the absolute perfection that belongs only to the inner life of the Trinity. On the contrary, we should not be surprised to find in Scripture imperfections and limitations that essentially belong to human modes of knowing and writing 70Canale, 67. GOP 100 1

# **Passages Difficult to Understand**

Another characteristic of Scripture is that in some cases we confront passages whose meaning is not clear or in which the theology expressed in them raises questions in our minds for which we do not have *final* answers 71This is somewhat similar to the statements of Ellen G. White on the amalgamation of man and beast (see Michael W. Campbell and Timothy G. Standish, "Amalgamation," The Ellen G. White Encyclopedia, 590-594). Divine inspiration does not mean everything revealed will be easily understood. In fact, it assumes that in some cases we will not fully apprehend the content and meaning of divine actions. The Bible itself recognizes this element of its nature. Peter wrote concerning the writings of Paul, "His letters contain some things that are hard to understand" (2 Peter 3:16, NIV). Hence, it is important to use proper hermeneutical principles in the study of the Bible. But the truth is that in some cases we are unable to answer all the questions that a passage raises. Let me use as an example God's order to the Israelites to destroy the Canaanites (Ex. 23:32, 33; 34:11-16; Deut. 2:34; 7:1-5; 20:16-18).GOP 100.2

We know that such a command was not arbitrary. The Lord granted them a time of probation (Gen. 15:13-16), but they had corrupted themselves beyond the point of repair (Deut. 9:5). They were to experience God's judgment against sin and corruption. But there are at least two elements in the legislation that challenges our thinking. First, God was going to use the Israelites to destroy them (Deut. 7:2). It may have been God's intention to destroy those nations Himself, but the fact remains that He finally used the Israelites. Second, in a limited number of cases the total extermination included women and children (Deut. 2:34; 3:6; 20:16-18). Any Christian exegete will acknowledge that this issue is a difficult one. How, then, do we handle it? Although there are several ways of interpreting the passages, we recognize that it is difficult to provide a final answer for the questions raised by the texts. 72Conservative theologians have provided different answers but not one that is fully accepted by all Bible students. See C. S. Cowels, Eugene H. Merill, Daniel L. Gard, and Tremper Longman, Show No Mercy: Four Views on God and Canaanite Genocide (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003); and Pau Copan, Is God a Moral Monster? Making Sense of the Old Testament God (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011), 158-197. See also Ángel Manuel Rodríguez, "God as a Commander in Chief," Bible Questions Answered, Adventist Review, Nov. 12, 1998, 27. Andrew Sloane, At Home in a Strange Land: Using the Old Testament in Christian Ethics (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2008); Barna Magyarosi, Holy War and Cosmic Conflict in the Old Testament From the Exodus to the Exile, Adventist Theological Society Dissertation Series, (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Adventist Theological Society Publications, 2010); Michael Hasel, "Why Did God Order the Israelites to 'Utterly Destroy' the Canaanite Nations, Including Women and Children?" in Interpreting Scripture: Bible Questions and Answers, ed. Gerhard Pfandl (Silver Spring, Md.: Biblical Research Institute, 2010), 177-180; Paul Copan and Matthew Flannagan, Did God Really Command Genocide? (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2014). We could also eliminate some options. *GOP 101.1* 

From our understanding of the nature of the Bible, we would reject the suggestion that what we have here is not divinely inspired or that it is describing the natural result of human ethnic hatred and national pride. The fact that we do not fully understand the passages does not exclude divine inspiration. As a matter of fact, the text itself clearly states that God gave those specific orders to the Israelites. We can also eliminate any attempt to argue that the God of the Old Testament was not as loving as the God of the New Testament. The unity of Scripture argues against that. The God of both testaments is a God of love, mercy, and justice. *GOP 101.2* 

Then what do we do with a passage whose content appears to create theological difficulties? After excluding some inappropriate options, we should work on the basis of what we know. In this case we specifically know what the Bible teaches about God. We may not be able to understand all the ramifications of His command, but knowing that He is by nature a loving God we can trust that what He commanded was determined by that love. We also know that He is righteous and just, and therefore we can trust Him even though at the present time we may not clearly understand all His actions. In the future we will recognize that all His judgments are just and righteous. This larger biblical picture of God should be used in the discussion of a subject like the one under consideration. The point we are trying to make is that when studying passages that do not lend themselves to a clear interpretation, we do not need to question the fact that it was inspired by God. The limits of our knowledge should not be used to define what is or is not inspired in

ne Word of God. GOP 101.3

# The Prophet's Development in Understanding

An interesting aspect of the process of revelation/inspiration is that after receiving the message the prophets may not have fully understood it. We should keep in mind that occasionally the message given contained long-term revelations that went beyond the time of the prophets who received them. According to Peter, after the prophets received messages related to the sufferings of Christ, they "searched intently and with the greatest care, trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing" (1 Peter 1:10, 11, NIV). It was pointed out "to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven" (verse 12, NIV). The message may not have been difficult to understand, but they were not certain about its full implications and how it would be fulfilled. GOP 102.1

There were times the prophets simply did not understand the message, and had to ask the Lord to clarify it. Zechariah saw a vision of red, brown, and white horses, but was not able to understand its message. So he asked: "What are these, my Lord?" An angel provided more information to him in order to make the message intelligible (Zech. 1:8, 9, NIV; see also verses 18-21). In another vision the angel asked him, "What do you see?" The prophet described the vision and, realizing that he could not understand it, asked, "What are these, my Lord?" The angel, perhaps surprised by the question, asked the prophet, "Do you not know what these are?" The prophet replied, "No, my Lord." Then the message was clarified for him (Zech. 4:1-7, NIV). As in the experience of Jeremiah discussed above, the angel was interested in making sure that the prophet received the vision and that he understood it. This was done by asking him to describe in his own words the content of the vision and by asking him whether the meaning was clear. The verbal description accurately corresponded to the revelation given to the prophet. Little by little the prophet gained a better comprehension of the revelation. GOP 102.2

There is also the experience of Peter, who, after receiving the same vision from the Lord three times, "was wondering [Greek, diaporeo,

"to be greatly perplexed" 73Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich, and Danker, 235. about the meaning of the vision" (Acts 10:17, NIV). He was not pleased with his own understanding of it. Later on, when three visitors were arriving at his home, he "was still thinking [dienzumeomai, "to give serious thought to something, to ponder"] <sup>74lbid., 244.</sup> about the vision" (verse 19, NIV). The Spirit did not correct Peter's initial misunderstanding, nor did He fully explain to him the meaning of the vision. He simply commanded Peter to go with the three visitors. In other words, the Spirit was going to reveal to the apostle the meaning of the vision through the flew of history. Two days later he arrived at the house of the Gentile Cornelius. talked to him, and then spoke to the group meeting in the house about the vision: "God has shown me that I should not call anyone impure or unclean" (verse 28, NIV). The divine message, conveyed to him through a vision that he had originally totally misunderstood, was by then clear. The Spirit had little by little led him to a correct and fuller understanding of the divine revelation. God's providential acts on behalf of a group of believers were used by Him to clarify the meaning of the vision to the prophet. GOP 102.3

Abraham thought that the divine promise of the son was to be fulfilled through Ishmael, and years later the Lord clarified it for him (*Gen. 21:11, 12*). Samuel thought that the Lord sent him to anoint the eldest son of Jesse as king, and the Lord corrected him (*1 Sam. 16:6, 7*). Jeremiah appeared to have concluded that his call to the prophetic office would keep him from a life of constant suffering and rejection by the people (*Jer. 1:4-19*). When his interpretation of the call proved to be wrong, he was extremely disappointed, and concluded that the Lord was to him "like a deceptive brook" (*Jer. 15:15-18*, NIV). The language he used was so strong that the Lord had to reprimand him (verse 18). *GOP 103.1* 

There were times the Lord had to provide more information to the prophets to help them understand the message He was entrusting to them or to correct their misunderstandings of it. In all of these we witness a divine concern to make sure that the message was clearly understood. The human dimension did not weaken the process of revelation/inspiration but strengthened it. God continued to work with the prophet until the message came through clearly and accurately. *GOP 103.2* 

# **Summary and Conclusions**

The theological distinction between revelation and inspiration is useful for discussion and analysis of the topic, but it is not fully true to the biblical text. Biblical writers did not seem to have made such a distinction. They spoke about the Holy Spirit carrying/guiding the prophets throughout the whole process of what we call revelation/inspiration. A doctrine of revelation/ inspiration that radically distinguishes between the two separates what the Bible keeps together. *GOP 103.3* 

In the process of revelation/inspiration God condescended and adapted His infinite thoughts to the mind, thought patterns, and language of the prophets. Something wonderful and mysterious happened in the mind of the prophets as the divine mind entered into contact with the human mind. This divine act of condescension establishes that in the revelation/inspiration process God and humans work together. Yet the end result was the Word of God. Any radical dichotomy between thought and words distorts the biblical process of revelation/inspiration. In spite of the fact that the words are not inspired, the Spirit continued to guide the prophets as they conveyed the message to their audiences. The words are not inspired in the sense that God is communicating His message, not in His own language, but in the language and vocabulary of the prophets. The divine thoughts were embodied in the language, grammar, and cultural expressions of the writer. But even in that process God guided the prophets in order for them to use their best cognitive and linguistic abilities in communicating the message. Thus the trustworthiness and reliability of the message was divinely reaffirmed in its oral or written form, GOP 103.4

The phenomena of Scripture reveals that in the revelation/inspiration process God can lead the prophet, through the Spirit, to select and adapt materials from sources that contain information providing useful data or language to the biblical writer. That which originally was not a divine revelation is now, through a process of revision and adaptation, incorporated under the guidance of the Spirit into the body of revealed material. The human utterances have become the Word of God. *GOP* 103.5

# Chapter 4 - The Use of Scripture by Bible Writers

#### Clinton Wahlen

Studying the use of Scripture by Bible writers involves broader hermeneutical issues such as the nature of inspiration, the relationship between the testaments, the role of Israel in prophecy and prophetic fulfillment in general, and whether inspired writers had access to hermeneutical tools inaccessible to other interpreters, including modern readers. 1As used here, "Scripture" refers to the 66 canonical books accepted by Protestants. Evangelical interpreters, to say nothing of their more liberal counterparts, hold widely different positions on all of these issues. <sup>2See the summaries in Darrell</sup> L. Bock, "Evangelicals and the Use of the Old Testament in the New. Part 1," Bibliotheca Sacra 142 (July-September 1985): 209-223; and Robert L. Thomas, "The New Testament Use of the Old Testament," Master's Seminary Journal 13, no. 1 (Spring 2002): 88-98. See also Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., Darrell L. Bock, and Peter Enns. Three Views on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008) and especially the very useful prolegomenon by Jonathan Lunde, "An Introduction to Central Questions in the New Testament Use of the Old Testament," 7-41. Fortunately, there remains substantial agreement among many Seventh-day Adventist interpreters on some of the most important hermeneutical issues. <sup>3Richard M.</sup> Davidson, "Biblical Interpretation," in Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology, Commentary Reference Series 12 (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald®, 2000), 58-104. See also idem, "New Testament Use of the Old Testament," Journal of the Adventist Theological Society 5, no. 1 (1994): 14-39. The most pertinent of these principles for our purposes is the recognition that "the Bible is its own best interpreter and when studied as a whole it depicts a consistent, harmonious truth (2 Tim. 3:16; Heb. 1:1, 2; cf. Selected Messages, 1:19, 20; The Great Controversy, v, vi)." 4"Methods of Bible Study," 2.a(3), a document endorsed by the General Conference Executive Committee at the Annual Council, October 12. 1986. See Adventist Review, Jan. 22, 1987, 18-20. GOP 105 1

Since the Bible is its own best interpreter, it is important for us to observe how that process takes place. How do the Bible writers interpret the writings of their predecessors? Many answers have been given to this question and most of them are neither helpful nor

faithful to the biblical text. For example, it is not accurate to say that the Bible writers, when quoting Scripture, sometimes impose a meaning on the text that is foreign to the author's original intention; or that they used methods of interpretation that came to be used only well after the final books of the New Testament were written, such as pesher exegesis, homiletical midrash, or an allegorical method. Such ideas have only clouded study of this topic. While we cannot in this brief study address all of the various issues involved, careful attention to how both Old and New Testament authors approached and interpreted Scripture can provide us with several important keys for interpretation of their writings. GOP 105.2

# **Unity of Scripture**

First and foremost, in harmony with the frequent New Testament citation of the Old Testament 5Direct quotations of the Old Testament by writers of the New Testament number about 300; allusions are substantially more, perhaps in the thousands. See Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., The Uses of the Old Testament in the New (Chicago: Moody, 1985), 2, 3. we must recognize a fundamental unity and continuity throughout Scripture. This continuity is illustrated in references to an "everlasting covenant" (e.g., Gen. 17:7, 13, 19; Ps. 89:3, 4; 105:8-11; Jer. 32:36-41; Heb. 13:20) and "the everlasting gospel" (Rev. 14:6, 7; cf. Heb. 4:2). We should also recognize that the New Testament writers significantly clarify expectations regarding Israel, the covenant, and God's plan for humanity. In addition, we should not be surprised to find some modifications to earlier prophetic hopes based on this "everlasting" or universal perspective in view of Israel's response to Jesus (e.g., Matt. 28:18-20; John 10:14-16; Acts 2:27-36; Rom. 9-11; Gal. 3:16; 6:15, 16; 1 Thess. 2:14-16; Rev. 21; 22). Consequently, many of the prophecies that might have been fulfilled in an earthly Israelite kingdom (e.g., Isa. 65:17-25) will find fulfillment only in the new earth after the millennium (Rev. 20:7-21:5). With these foundational principles in mind, we will now consider how they are carried out in practice by the Bible writers. Before approaching our main task of analyzing how the various Bible writers interpret Scripture, we need to consider how they related to its implicit historical claims. GOP 106 1

#### Historical

Within the biblical canon there is a pervasive acceptance of the events recorded in Scripture as historical beginning with the foundational accounts of the Creation, the Fall, and the Flood, References to the account of Creation in Genesis 1 and 2 as historical fact abound throughout Scripture. God is identified as having made heaven and earth (e.g., 2 Kings 19:15, Neh. 9:6, Isa. 37:16, Acts 4:24). Numerous psalms affirm that the sun, moon, and stars as well as all life on earth is the handiwork of God (e.g., Ps. 19:1-4, 24:1, 2, 33:6-9, 90:2, 95:3-6, 102:25, 104, 136:5-9, 146:6, 148), and that human beings in a special sense are His creation (e.g., Ps. 8:3-6; 100:3; 139:13-16). This conviction underlies all of biblical ethics, from fair treatment of the poor (Prov. 14:31; 17:5) and of hired workers (Prov. 26:10) to relations between nations and peoples (Acts 17:26) as well as within the church (1 Cor. 11:7-12; Gal. 3:28) and the home (Eph. 5:22-33). The two institutions based on Creation, the Sabbath and marriage (Gen. 2:1-3, 24), are reinforced in the teachings of Jesus (Mark 2:27; Matt. 19:4-6) and throughout the New Testament. GOP 106.2

The Bible writers likewise refer to the fall of Adam as the historical reality necessitating redemption by the second "Adam" (*Rom. 5:12-19*), which assures final restoration of believers into God's image and their reception of immortality (*Rom. 5:20, 21; 1 Cor. 15:45-54*). The global destruction at the time of the Flood and the covenant that God made with all living things on the earth immediately afterward (*Gen. 7:17-23; 9:8-17*) are referred to as the basis of hope on the one hand (*Isa. 54:7-10; Heb. 11:7*) and of final judgment of the world by fire on the other (*Matt. 24:37-39; 2 Peter 2:5; 3:6, 7*). *GOP 106.3* 

Almost as dominant a theme in the Old Testament is Israel's exodus from Egypt, which marks their deliverance from bondage and birth as a nation. Already the retelling of the Exodus is enshrined within the Passover ritual (Ex. 12:25-27) and in the prologue of the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20:2; Deut. 5:6). The many historical summaries found throughout Scripture (e.g., Deut. 29:19; Josh. 24:1-15; Neh. 9; Ps. 78; 105; 106; 136; Acts 7; 1 Cor. 10:1-10) include frequent references to Creation and the Exodus,

underscoring both the Bible writers trust in the historical veracity of the events recorded and the continuing relevance and important role of remembrance of that history for the people of God (*Rom.* 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:11).GOP 107.1

The genealogies likewise underscore that God's plan for His people is worked out in history. The protoevangelium of Genesis 3:15 announces that God's promise is to be fulfilled through the seed of the woman and finds expression through the chronogenealogies of Genesis 5 and 11 (cf. Gen. 10:1-32), the patriarchs' posterity (Gen. 25, 36, 46, Num. 26), the genealogies of Moses and Aaron (Ex. 6:14-25), David (Ruth 4:18-22), and the extensive genealogies of 1 Chronicles 1-9. The New Testament begins with a genealogy of Jesus (Matt. 1:1-16), including a variant version given in Luke 3:23-38 6Matthew gives Jesus' royal descent through Solomon (Matt. 1:6), while Luke's genealogy may give His maternal line through Nathan (Luke 3:31), an explanation that goes back to at least the fourth or fifth century, with hints of this tradition already in the second century (see Christoph Ochs, Matthaeus Adversus Christianos: The Use of the Gospel of Matthew in Jewish Polemics Against the Divinity of Jesus, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2, no. 350 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013], 75, note 186). while Paul relates his Jewish ancestry from Benjamin (Phil. 3:5). GOP 107.2

### Citations of Scripture by Bible Writers

The inspired writers' confidence in the unity, clarity, and the historical veracity of Scripture (not merely its verisimilitude) underlie their citations of Scripture. A closer look at these citations can help us understand the various interpretative practices employed by Bible writers. Their use of other inspired writings constitute a model for us as we seek a trustworthy method to understand Scripture. The Bible writers' use of other inspired writings can be categorized under five headings: exegetical, theological, typological, rhetorical, and prophetic fulfillment. We will now look at these uses more closely, illustrating each by means of examples. *GOP* 107.3

### Exegetical

An exegetical use of Scripture can be recognized when it is employed in direct quotation and interpreted in harmony with the original intent of the passage. <sup>7While</sup> we should not insist that the inspired writer demonstrate an understanding of the quoted passage identical with that derived by using the modern tools of biblical scholarship, careful study of the larger context of the verse(s) being quoted generally confirms that the writer was well aware of the larger scriptural context (Charles H. Dodd, According to the Scriptures: The Sub-Structure of New Testament Theology [London: Nisbet, <sup>1952]).</sup> Thus, later writers within the Hebrew Bible interpret earlier inspired writings. 8See Michael A. Fishbane, Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985). New Testament writers interpret the Old Testament, frequently preceding direct quotations by an introductory formula such as "it is written." Allusions are more difficult to recognize but can be convincingly established by recognizing the collocation of infrequently used key words in a later passage pointing to the earlier inspired context. The following definitions of direct quotation and allusion and how they differ from scriptural "echoes" will be helpful as we proceed: GOP 107.4

A quotation has a near verbal similarity to the Masoretic Text or lxx; an allusion uses several words or phrases from the Old Testament passage (verbal similarity); and an echo has few verbal parallels, just a word or two or a theme. The first two are conscious allusions, the third may not be intended by the author but implicit in the larger

context. <sup>9</sup>Grant R. Osborne, The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove, III.: InterVarsity, 2006), 332. <sub>GOP 108.1</sub>

In the Gospels we find a number of occasions Jesus seems to have cited and interpreted Scripture exegetically. In Matthew 19, for example, some Pharisees ask Him whether it is permissible according to the Mosaic law "to divorce one's wife for any cause" (verse 3). From the underlying early traditions discernible in Rabbinic sources, we know that the interpretation of the reference to "indecency" in Deuteronomy 24:1 was a controverted issue in the first century 10See David Instone-Brewer, Divorce and Remarriage in the Bible: The Social and Literary Context (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 134-In. reply, Jesus points his interlocutors to the broader context of Scripture that is not to be overlooked: God's establishment of marriage between man and woman at Creation (Matt. 19:4-6: cf. Gen. 2:24). Not satisfied with this apparent finessing of the guestion, the Pharisees press Jesus as to whv "commanded" (entellomai) a certificate of divorce. Jesus' answer displays a clear and careful exegesis of Deuteronomy. First, the casuistic form of the Mosaic law indicates that divorce is permitted rather than commanded, and then only in the specific case that the husband "has found some indecency in her." In going on to say that "whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another commits adultery," Jesus clarifies the meaning of the word "some indecency" (lit. "nakedness of a thing," Heb. 'erwat debar) as referring to sexual immorality (porneia). 11Thus Jesus essentially urges an interpretation that is even stricter than the Shammaite position. So Richard M. Davidson, "Divorce and Remarriage in the Old Testament: A Fresh Look at Deuteronomy 24:1-4," Journal of the Adventist Theological Society 10, no.1-2 (1999): 8. According to Hillel, Deuteronomy 24:1 allowed divorce for virtually any cause, even if a wife "spoiled his dish [of food]" (ibid., 5), a position the disciples seem to have preferred (Matt. 19:10). COP 108 2

Another example of exegetical method is seen in Jesus' refutation of the charge that His disciples, in plucking heads of grain on the Sabbath, were doing "work" and thus transgressing the commandment. In essence Jesus argued that human need took

precedence over concerns of holiness, based not only on the precedent set by David in connection with the sacred bread of the Temple but also on the Sabbath's original purpose—it was "made for humankind" (*Mark 2:27*, NRSV). In pointing to the Sabbath as the only element of Creation week specifically "made" (*egeneto*) after human beings and thus made "for" them (*Gen. 2:1-3*; cf. *Gen. 1:26-28*), Jesus again exhibits an exegetical sensitivity to the original intention suggested by the text of Genesis. <sup>12On</sup> the textual issues connected with verse 27 and the record of a similar statement being made by Rabbi Simeon ben Menasya in connection with Exodus 31:14, see William L. Lane, The Gospel According to Mark: The English Text With Introduction, Exposition, and Notes, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 119 and note <sup>99.</sup> The significance of Jesus' exegetical example in setting the pattern for the use of Scripture in the apostolic proclamation can hardly be overestimated. *GOP 108.3* 

Among the numerous Pauline references to the Hebrew Bible. frequently questioned is his interpretation in Galatians 3:15, 16 of Abraham's "seed" (sperma, Heb. zera), which presses a strict reading of the grammatical singular form despite the fact that the Greek and Hebrew terms, when used of offspring, are normally collective singular (though these can also refer to a single individual as in LXX. Gen. 4:25 and 1 Sam. 1:11). Use of the word later in the chapter in a collective sense (Gal. 3:27-29, as also in several other places) 13E.g., Romans 9:7, 8; 2 Corinthians 11:22, and esp. Romans 4:18, which quotes Genesis 15:5 in reference to the "many nations" that proceeded from Abraham in line with the promise of Genesis 17:5. shows that Paul is very much aware of its normal sense. Close examination of Genesis 22:17 being guoted shows that the meaning of "seed" shifts from descriptions of Abraham's numerous descendants as "the stars of heaven" and "the sand that is on the seashore" to the "seed" (zera ') that "shall possess the gate of his enemies." 14Unless otherwise indicated, all Bible quotations are from the English Standard Version. According to Richard Davidson, "the same narrowing of the word 'seed' from a collective to messianic singular" can be discerned in Genesis 3:15 15See Davidson, "New Testament Use of the Old Testament," 30, 31, citing also Dale M. Wheeler, "Paul's Use of the Old Testament in Gal. 3:15" (Th.D. diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 1987). As we shall see, this narrowing of collective Israel to a singular messianic figure is

evident in other contexts also. A messianic interpretation of the promised seed illustrates how Christ's advent illuminated the exegesis of the Old Testament. GOP 109.1

While a Christian meaning is not to be artificially superimposed upon earlier texts, exegesis need not so narrow the meaning of the original text so as to exclude a deeper meaning when that meaning may already be comprehended in the earlier passage and comports with the larger context of Scripture. In such cases three criteria have been suggested to help interpreters recognize when a text intends such a deeper meaning: 16See Kaiser, Uses of the Old Testament, 68, who calls this scriptural phenomenon a "generic prediction" (230); cf. Davidson, "New Testament Use of the Old Testament," 30, 31. (1) presence of collective singular nouns (e.g. "seed," "servant," "branch"); (2) shifts between singular and plural pronouns or pronominal suffixes in an Old Testament passage (e.g., "servant" is collective Israel in Isaiah 44:1 and Messiah in Isaiah 52:13-53:12; reference to the monarchy and to the "final Davidic ruler. Christ." as seen by alternation between singular and plural pronouns in Amos 9:11, 12); and, most decisively, (3) the analogy of Scripture visible from antecedent theology (e.g., the "seed of the woman" in Genesis 3:15 already employs the word as a near-technical term). GOP 109.2

Another example of exegesis seems to be employed by Paul in his quotation of Isaiah 54:1 in Galatians 4:27, despite his oft-cited use of allegoreo in verse 24. 17The Greek term is glossed in BDAG, 45, as "to use analogy or likeness to express someth[ing]." The apostle recognizes that the Isaianic passage, in addressing desolate Jerusalem as a barren woman 18A concise summary of the metaphorical depiction in Isaiah 54 of rebellious Israel in exile (Isa. 1-39) by a barren woman ("old" Jerusalem) and redeemed Israel (Isa. 40-66) by a fertile woman ("new" Jerusalem) is given in Joel Willitts, "Isa. 54:1 in Gal. 4:24b-27: Reading Genesis in Light of Isaiah," Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche 96 (2005): 193-195. and its use of linking terms found in Genesis 11:30 19The word 'āqārāh ("barren") is found in both verses, and the verb yld in Isaiah 54:1 echoes wālād ("child") in Genesis 11:30. alludes to Sarah's apparent inability to bear children. The fact that the larger context of Isaiah 54 contains apocalyptic-like imagery of a new Jerusalem having foundations laid "in sapphires" and "gates of crystal" (verses

11, 12, NASB) suggests a city built by God (Heb. 11:10; cf. Rev. 21:10-21). Paul, in likening "the present Jerusalem" to Hagar and "the Jerusalem above" to Sarah (Gal. 4:25, 26) as reflective of the old and new covenants, is not allegorizing the passage but rather drawing out the soteriological implications of an analogy already suggested by Isaiah and inherent in the Genesis narrative whereby Abraham attempted "to fulfill God's promise of descendants by human means." <sup>20Davidson,</sup> "New Testament Use of the Old Testament," <sup>31</sup> GOP 110.1

As is evident from the above examples, a close study of the entire context of the passages quoted by inspired writers<sup>21See note 7</sup>, above. as well as a comprehensive knowledge of relevant biblical antecedents is necessary in many cases in order to understand the larger picture being indicated by their exegesis. *GOP 110.2* 

### Theological

A theological use of Scripture by Bible writers can be recognized when crucial biblical themes are alluded to without an explicit quotation. We have already observed the extent to which the historical record of Creation is affirmed by the Bible writers. So it is not surprising that their theological reflections frequently employ this motif. For example, Israel's origin is described in terms reminiscent of Adam's creation (*Isa. 43:1*; cf. *Gen. 2:7*). The gospel is predicated on the power of God to re-create (or restore) human beings into the image of their Maker (2 Cor. 4:6; 5:17; Eph. 2:10; Col. 3:10) and, ultimately, to re-create the heavens and the earth in order to restore them to their state of pristine perfection (2 Peter 3:11-13; Rev. 21:1-5).GOP 110.3

Another crucial theological concept permeating Scripture is the Exodus. It was foreshadowed in Abraham's call out of Ur (*Gen. 11:31-12:1*; *Neh. 9:7-12*; cf. *Isa. 51:2*) <sup>22F. F. Bruce, The New Testament Development of Old Testament Themes (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), 32, 33, pointing out the New Testament's similar characterization of Abraham as exemplary (Acts 7:2-7; Heb. 11:8-10; cf. Gal. 3:8, 9). and even foretold to him in a dream (*Gen. 15:12-16*). Throughout the Old Testament, the Exodus event as God's act of delivering Israel from Egyptian</sup>

slavery (*Ex. 15:22*) becomes paradigmatic for describing God's future acts of salvation—particularly in relation to Israel's exodus from Babylonian exile and return to the promised land (*Eze. 20:33*; *Isa. 43:16-19*; *52:12*). <sup>23</sup>See Bernard W. Anderson, "Exodus Typology in Second Isaiah," in Israel's Prophetic Heritage: Essays in Honor of James Muilenburg, ed. B. Anderson and W. Harrelson (New York: Harper, 1962), 177-195; Bruce, New Testament Development, 33. "If at the Exodus Yahweh saved His people by making 'a way in the sea, a path in the mighty waters,' so He promises the children of the exile that when they pass through the waters He will be with them: He will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert." <sup>24lbid</sup>·*GOP 110.4* 

The Gospel writers, in describing Jesus' life and ministry in these terms, show their awareness of this prophetic theme, Mark 1:3 quotes Isaiah 40, linking the preparatory work of John the Baptist with Isaiah's new exodus. <sup>25Further,</sup> see Rikki E. Watts, Isaiah's New Exodus and Mark, WUNT 2, no. 88 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997). Matthew sees Israel's exodus "recapitulated in the personal experience of Christ " 26Bruce, New Testament Development, 34. Davidson, "New Testament Use of the Old Testament," 20, finds this connection present already in Balaam's oracles; cf. his additional observation on page 21: "Jesus indicates His own awareness of His role as the New Israel in the New Exodus by consistently meeting the devil's temptations with quotations from Deuteronomy 6-8 (where ancient Israel's temptations in the wilderness are summarized)." His quotation of Hosea 11:1, "Out of Egypt have I called My Son" (Matt. 2:15) shows sensitivity to the larger context of that book and other eighthcentury prophets who describe Israel's return from exile in messianic terms as a new exodus. <sup>27</sup>Ibid., 20 (citing Hosea 2:14, 15; 12:9, 13; 13:4, 5; Isa. 11:15, 16; 35; 40:3-5; 41:17-20; 42:14-16; 43:1-3, 14-21; 48:20, 21; 49:3-5, 8-12; 51:9-11; 52:3-6, 11, 12; 55:12, 13; Amos 9:7-15; Micah 7:8-20; cf. Jer. 23:4-8; 16:14, 15; 31:32). See already Jindřich Mánek, "The New Exodus in the Books of Luke," Novum Testamentum 2 (1957): 8-23; also David Daube, The Exodus Pattern in the Bible (London: Faber & Faber, 1963). The idea originates in the Old Testament; it is not being read into it. Thus Luke also, in referring to Jesus' approaching death, evokes this expectation through use of the (Greek) term exodos (Luke 9:31). The mention of Christ's death having occurred at the time of the Passover (John 19:14; cf. 1 Cor. 5:7) and the memorialization of

that event in the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11:23-26) underscore the early Christian understanding of the Jewish festival's prophetic significance and may reflect Jesus' teaching concerning it. <sup>28 Joachim</sup> Jeremias, The Eucharistic Words of Jesus (London: SCM, 1966). GOP 111 1

Closely connected to the concept of a new exodus, whereby Israel would return from exile and be reestablished in the land, is the prophetic expectation of God's reign in the personage of a coming ideal King (e.g., *Isa. 32:1*, 17), <sup>29Bruce</sup>, New Testament Development, 25, <sup>72-75</sup>. which the Gospels present as a central feature of Jesus' proclamation of the kingdom of God (*Matt. 4:17*; *Mark 1:15*; *Luke 4:43*, 17-21; *John 3:3*, 5; 18:36).GOP 111.2

Another theme woven throughout the biblical narrative is that of the great controversy or war of evil against God and His purposes. reaching its ultimate expression in the book of Revelation, especially chapter 12. The war begins in heaven (verse 7), spreads to the earth (verse 9, alluding to Gen. 3), and includes a final assault on God's eschatological remnant (verse 17). This description of the conflict as between God (or Christ) and Satan shows its pervasiveness throughout Scripture and its theological importance 30See now The Great Controversy and the End of Evil: Biblical and Theological Studies in Honor of Ángel Manuel Rodríguez in Celebration of His Seventieth Birthday, ed. Gerhard Pfandl (Silver Spring, Md.: Biblical Research Institute, 2015), 3-116. Closely related to this theme is that of the judgment which, as the Psalms and Prophets eloquently underscore, serves as the means of deliverance and vindication throughout Israel's history and ultimately brings sin and death to an end (Dan. 7:26, 27; 8:14; Rev. 20). The judgment is also the means by which God and His purposes are acknowledged as just and true in every respect (Rom. 3:4: Rev. 15:2-4).GOP 111.3

# **Typological**

Another way in which the Bible writers use Scripture suggests that they shared a particular understanding of the relation between the testaments that can best be described as typological. <sup>31See G. W. H.</sup> Lampe and K. J. Woollcombe, Essays in Typology (London: SCM, 1957), who distinguish biblical typology from allegorism. That is, certain persons,

events, and institutions are "specifically designed" by God "to predictively prefigure their antitypical eschatological fulfillment in Christ and the gospel realities brought about by Christ." <sup>32Davidson</sup>, "Biblical Interpretation," 83. GOP 112.1

Illustrative of this typological understanding of Scripture by New Testament writers are several occurrences of the word typos ("type"). 33Romans 5:14; 1 Corinthians 10:6; Hebrews 8:5; but also antitypos in Hebrews 9:24 and 1 Peter 3:21. Further, see Richard M. Davidson, Typology in Scripture: A Study of Hermeneutical τύπος Structures, Andrews University Seminary Doctoral Dissertation Series 2 (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 1981). A type is a divinely ordained prefiguration of a future reality (a person, event or institution) that will be even greater and more complete (the "antitype"). One instance of this use of typos is found in Paul's description of Adam as "a type of the one who was to come," referring to Jesus (Rom. 5:14). The surrounding verses (12-21) set up an elaborate set of contrasts between Adam as the original head of the human race but who brought sin, death, and condemnation into the world and Christ, the head of a new humanity, who brought righteousness, life, and justification to those who receive "the free gift" (verse 17). Additional occurrences of typos draw correlations between the testaments in terms of an event (Israel's rebellion in the wilderness is a warning for the church, 1 Cor. 10:6, 11) and an institution (the earthly sanctuary reflects the heavenly original, Heb. 8:5). GOP 112.2

In addition to the use of this linguistic indicator, there are other ways in which typological relationships are drawn in the New Testament. In the Gospel of Matthew, for example, Jesus points to Jonah's three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish as a "sign" (semeion) typifying His coming death and resurrection and that His work is greater (Matt. 12:38-41 parr). 34The relatively rare cognate verb sēmainō, which occurs only six times in the New Testament, is used to describe Jesus' metaphorical descriptions of His approaching death (John 12:33; 18:32; cf. 21:19) and the highly symbolic language in which the message of the book of Revelation is given (1:1). Rather than superimposing a typological understanding on the Old Testament narrative, there is an explicit recognition (verse 40) that Jonah himself poetically describes his harrowing experience in such terms (Jon. 2:1-6), thus enabling the

later correlation to be made. <sup>35</sup>See R. T. France, Matthew: Evangelist and Teacher (Exeter, U.K.: Paternoster, 1989), 190; cf. Robert Horton Gundry, The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew's Gospel With Special Reference to the Messianic Hope (Leiden: Brill, 1975), 210. GOP 112.3

Jesus also insists that the expected messiah (ho christos) is not merely the son of David but David's "Lord" (Mark 12:35-37, quoting Ps. 110:1) and that His own work is greater even than Solomon's (Matt. 12:42), 36Gundry (ibid., 228) plausibly suggests a historical context for Psalm 110 as legitimizing Solomon's reign in his old age amidst a power struggle among his sons, referring to Solomon as his "Lord" just as he had earlier indicated respect for Saul as God's chosen ruler. This seems to recognize the fact that in certain psalms David poetically describes his experience in language that goes beyond what could be applied solely to the historical king as God's "son" (e.g., Ps. 2; 22). 37Note Davidson, "New Testament Use of the Old Testament," 24: Psalm 2 moves from the local Davidic king as Yhwh's "son" "to the cosmic level of the divine Son, the Messiah" (pointing to verse 12, which uses language elsewhere in the Psalms "always reserved for the deity"). "This internal, typological indicator in Psalm 2 sets the tone for the remainder of the Davidic psalter; the Davidic mešiah or 'anointed one' is a type of the eschatological divine Messiah." In view of God's solemn promise to David (2 Sam. 7:12-16; cf. 23:5) and later prophetic announcements that God would raise up a New David (Isa. 11:1-5; Jer. 23:5, 6; 33:20, 21; Eze. 21:25-27; Hos. 3:4, 5; Amos 9:11, 12; Mic. 5:2-4; Zech. 8:3; cf. Gen. 49:10; Ps. 132:11), the New Testament writers identify Jesus as the messianic personage prefigured by the Israelite king and anticipated by the prophets. 381bid., 24: "What is implicit in the Psalms becomes explicit in the prophets. . . . The NT writers and Jesus Himself . . . are simply announcing the fulfillment of what was already indicated in the OT." This hermeneutic is evident, for example, in the proclamation of Peter (Acts 2:25-28, quoting Ps. 16:8-11) and Paul (Acts 13:32-37, quoting Ps. 2:7, Isa. 55:3, and Ps. 16:10, respectively). Further, see Bruce, New Testament Development, 69-75. Adding further to the Old Testament passages presaging the coming of Messiah, Jesus, in describing Himself as Israel's "shepherd" (Mark 14:27 par; John 10:1-16), hints that, through His gathering of God's "sheep" (Eze. 34:23, 24; 37:24, 25; Jer. 23:1-4) and through His approaching death (Zech. 13:7), prophecy is being fulfilled. GOP 113.1

Allusions made by Bible writers can also suggest a typological relationship. For example, several references to the final fiery iudament (Ps. 50:3, 4: 97:2-5: Mic. 1:3, 4: 1 Cor. 3:13: 2 Thess. 1:8: 2 Peter 3:12), and particularly to "the lake of fire" (Rev. 20:9, 14; cf. Ps. 46:6; Nahum 1:5, 6), seem to identify the Noachian flood as a type of the ultimate destruction of the world at the eschaton. There even seems to be at least one example of a future event being used as a type that anticipates and correlates with an even greater event further into the future. In the Olivet Discourse Jesus describes the impending destruction of Jerusalem (Matt. 24:15 parr; cf. Dan 9:26, 27) 39On the Danielic terminology, see Paul J. Ray, Jr., "The Abomination of Desolation in Daniel 9:27 and Related Texts: Theology of Retributive Judgment," in To Understand the Scriptures: Essays in Honor of William H. Shea, ed. David Merling (Berrien Springs, Mich.: The Institute of Archaeology/Siegfried H. Horn Archaeological Museum, 1997), 205-213. and then proceeds to use this future event as a type of the destruction that will occur at the end of the world (Matt. 24:27, 28/Luke 21:25, 26).GOP 113.2

#### Rhetorical

Rarely, there may be cases where Bible writers allude to or quote the language of Scripture but seem to apply it differently than what we might be able to conclude from a study of its original setting or context. One possible example of this is Paul's reference in 1 Corinthians 9:8-11 to the Mosaic command, "You shall not muzzle an ox when it is treading out the grain" (Deut. 25:4). The apostle seems to be using the language of the Old Testament passage but applies it differently from its Old Testament setting. 40Interpretations offered of this verse are summarized in Kaiser. Uses of the Old Testament, 219. However, Paul defends his (and Barnabas') right to financial support from the churches for gospel work, citing not just "human authority" but "the Law of Moses" (verses 8, 9). Then Paul asks, "Is it for oxen that God is concerned? Does he not speak certainly for our sake? It was written for our sake, because the plowman should plow in hope and the thresher thresh in hope of sharing in the crop" (verses 9, 10). While some feel constrained to make the rather obvious point that the Deuteronomic law was directed to people in order to lessen the apparent tension between it and Paul's application of it, the original intent of the law is clearly for the sake

of oxen. Yet Paul seems to deny this. <sup>41</sup>Unpersuasive is the suggestion that Paul "has expertly taken from its temporary wrapping a permanent principle, as Moses intended" (ibid., 217; similarly, C.K. Barrett, Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians, BNTC [Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1993], <sup>206</sup>). *GOP 113.3* 

Perhaps implicitly there is an analogous principle operating that if animals deserve such care then human beings deserve more. However, Paul does not actually argue this way, and, even in this case, the meaning of the text that is quoted must shift somewhat in order to accommodate the different Pauline application, which must rely on an extended theological sense for this law in harmony with the merciful thrust of the Mosaic legislation as a whole *GOP 114.1* 

Another and perhaps more likely possibility, suggested by Paul's reference to what "the Lord commanded" (verse 14) and his other citation of this law (1 Tim. 5:18), is that the apostle is following Jesus' interpretative application of it to gospel workers ("the laborer deserves his food" [Matt. 10:10]). 42See David Wenham, Paul: Follower of Jesus or Founder of Christianity? (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 191-193. In this case, the language of the law, while specifying the ox as a tvpical example, would be applicable to "any labourer, of any species of animal, including human." 43D. Instone Brewer, "1 Corinthians 9:9-11: A Literal Interpretation of 'Do not Muzzle the Ox,' " New Testament Studies 38, no. 4 (1992): 564, basing his conclusion on how this legal text seems to have been commonly understood in first-century Israel, judging from Jewish writings of the Second Temple period, as well as a careful evaluation of relevant Tannaitic and Rabbinic traditions. He adds: "This equivalence of 'ox' with all labourers is not just a legal nicety, but lies at the core of the Jewish understanding of their Law. Even when Josephus [Antiquities 4.233 (8.21)] is speaking about the literal significance to oxen of the ruling 'do not muzzle,' he calls oxen 'our fellow labourers' [suneirgasmenous]." In this case, it would not be merely a rhetorical use but an exegetical application of the passage based on the way it was literally understood in the first century. GOP 114.2

### **Prophetic Fulfillment**

Finally, with regard to how the Bible writers referred to and

recognized the fulfillment of prophecy, several foundational principles should be kept in mind. 44The points relevant for this study have been drawn from among those mentioned in Davidson, "Interpreting Old Testament Prophecy," in Understanding Scripture: An Adventist Approach, ed. George W. Reid (Silver Spring, Md.: Biblical Research Institute, 2006), 183-185. First, Bible writers show no hesitancy in affirming prophecy as predictive 45In addition to the numerous Old Testament quotations in Matthew introduced by such phrases as "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken" (1:22. 23; 2:14, 15, 17, 18, 23; 4:14-16; 8:16, 17; 12:17-21; 13:14, 15; 13:34, 35; 21:4, 5; 27:9, 10; cf. 2:5, 6) and Jesus' affirmation that the Scriptures "must be fulfilled" (Matt. 26:54; Luke 24:44), see Deuteronomy 18:22; Isaiah 46:9-10; 1 Peter 1:10-<sup>12.</sup> which by one estimate amounts to nearly 30 percent of the Old Testament 46There are 6,641 of 23,210 verses of the Old Testament (28.6 percent) that contain predictive material, according to J. Barton Payne, Encyclopedia of Biblical Prophecy: The Complete Guide to Scriptural Predictions and Their Fulfillment (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1973), 13, 674, 675, cited in Davidson, "Interpreting Old Testament Prophecy," 183. Second, biblical apocalyptic prophecy, exemplified in the books of Daniel and Revelation, should be distinguished from other forms of apocalyptic literature 47On the term "biblical apocalyptic" as separable from pagan apocalyptic writings such as the Sibylline Oracles and uninspired Jewish works such as 1 and 2 Esdras and 1, 2, and 3 Enoch, which tend to have a narrow, nationalistic outlook, see Joel N. Musvosvi, "The Issue of Genre and Apocalyptic Prophecy," Asia Adventist Seminary Studies 5 (2002): 45. Biblical apocalyptic "envisions a cosmic God who addresses the whole world with an eternal message" (ibid.). as well as from general prophecy, which is the more typical form found in the Old Testament. <sup>48For a convenient comparison</sup> of these two genres of Bible prophecy, see Davidson, "Interpreting Old Testament Prophecy," 184, 185. The book of Revelation employs many symbols from the visions of Daniel showing the close affinity that exists between these companion apocalyptic works. This shared symbolism also includes the time period of 1260 days, indicating an agreed timetable extending toward the end of world history for the outworking in historical time of God's purposes and His ultimate triumph over evil. In short, Daniel and Revelation are mutually interpretative; one cannot be fully understood apart from the other. 49Zechariah and the Olivet Discourse (sometimes called "the Synoptic Apocalypse") are also drawn upon in a significant way. On the former, see Marko

Jauhiainen, "'Behold, I am Coming': The Use of Zechariah in Revelation" (Ph.D. diss., University of Cambridge, 2003), summarized in idem, "'Behold, I am Coming': The Use of Zechariah in Revelation," Tyndale Bulletin 56 (2005): 157-160. On the latter, see Clinton Wahlen, "Matthew 24:29. Have These Signs Happened?" in Interpreting Scripture: Bible Questions and Answers, ed. Gerhard Pfandl, Biblical Research Institute Studies 2 (Silver Spring, Md.: Biblical Research Institute, 2010), 285-288. General prophecy, on the other hand, focuses primarily on God's will in terms of the immediate historical situation confronting God's people and encouraging their obedient response, giving only glimpses of the end-time consummation "at the end of the days." 50Gurdon C. Oxtoby, Prediction and Fulfillment in the Bible (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1966), 82. His privileging of fulfillment over prediction, however, denying that in the Old Testament "the career of Jesus was described in advance" (119), exaggerates the discontinuity between the testaments. Third, of the major categories of Old Testament predictive prophecy, two receive prominent attention in the New Testament: messianic prophecies and prophecies concerning Israel. We will look at these two classes of predictive prophecy in order to better understand how Bible writers refer to them. GOP 114.3

### **Messianic Prophecies**

The New Testament writers are definite that Old Testament messianic expectations were fulfilled in Jesus (e.g., Luke 24:27; John 1:45; 2 Cor. 1:20). Nevertheless, some Old Testament prophecies that may seem ready-made for a messianic application in the New Testament (e.g., Gen. 3:15; Num. 24:17) find no direct or explicit confirmation of their fulfillment in the life of Christ. 51Fulfillment of these promises are only hinted at (Genesis 3:15 in Luke 10:19 and Revelation 12:9; Numbers 24:17 in Matthew 2:2) or relegated to the future (Romans 16:20 suggests that Genesis 3:15 finds its fulfillment in the life of the church or at the final consummation). Other messianic prophecies cited by Bible writers are either difficult to identify (e.g., Matt. 2:23) or seem to have no obvious underpinning within the Old Testament passage being referenced (verses 15, 18). Upon closer scrutiny, however, these prophecies have been cited intelligibly by the Bible writers in harmony with their immediate contexts and the wider Old intention, 52Davidson, "New Testament Use of the Old Testament," examines 10 of the most common such citations (Matt. 1:23; 2:15,

18, 23; 27:35, 36; and John 19:24, 37 et al., citing Ps. 22; Acts 2:25-33; 1 Cor. 9:8-10; Jesus in Matt. 12:40 referring to Jonah; Gal. 3:16; 4:21-31), concluding that "the NT writers consistently remain faithful to the original passages in their immediate and wider OT contexts" (34).  $GOP_{116.1}$ 

Of the many passages that might be dealt with, we can here look at only a few examples. On the typological basis already discussed, Psalm 2 (ascribed to David in Acts 4:25) is referred to as being fulfilled in Jesus as the Christ (Acts 4:26; cf. Ps. 2:2) and the Son of God (Acts 13:33; Heb. 1:5; cf. Ps. 2:7). This psalm prophetically extends beyond the scope of the Old Testament history in that it includes an announcement that the King will receive the nations as His inheritance and "the ends of the earth" as the extent of His realm (Ps. 2:8, 9; cf. Rev. 12:5; 19:15). 53Cf. note 37, above. In a similar vein, Jesus Himself suggests that David's reference to the Messiah as his "Lord" (Ps. 110:1) indicates something more than merely a reestablishment of the Davidic line (Mark 12:35-37; cf. Acts 2:34-36). More specifically, that this future ruler who would "shepherd" God's "flock" was to come from Bethlehem (Mic. 5:2-4 [HB 1-3]), the "city of David," is fulfilled through Christ's birth there is also affirmed by New Testament writers (Matt. 2:4-6; Luke 2:4, 11; cf. John 7:42).GOP 116.2

Most significantly, the Servant Songs of Isaiah 42-53 are announced as fulfilled in Christ (Matt. 8:17; 12:15-21; John 12:38; 1 Peter 2:21, 22; cf. Mark 10:45). In the context of Isaiah, these songs alternate between references to a corporate entity (God's servant Israel) and to an individual (the Messiah), "indicating that the Messianic Servant will represent and recapitulate the experience of OT Israel." 54Davidson, "Interpreting Old Testament Prophecy," 188. This Servant cannot be synonymous with Israel, because He gathers them back to God (Isa. 49:5, 6) and is ultimately stricken for their transgression (Isa. 53:8). This final song "also depicts the Messiah's resurrection, high-priestly intercessory ministry, and royal exaltation (Isa. 52:13; 53:11, 12)." 55Ibid. GOP 116.3

### **Prophecies Concerning Israel**

While numerous Old Testament prophecies concern Israel's future,

both the promises and the warnings, as with other nations (e.g., the Canaanites in Gen. 15:16 and the people of Nineveh in Jonah 3:4-10), were conditional on their response to God's word (see Jer. 18:7-10; cf. Jer. 7:23). Beginning with Abraham and reiterated to Isaac and Jacob. God's promises to Israel can be summarized in terms of a gift of land, countless descendants, and their role as a blessing to the nations (Gen. 12:1-3: 15:8: 17:7, 8: 26:2-5: 28:13-15). These promises, however, cannot be separated from Israel's reason for existence—to worship God (Ex. 4:22) and to be a holy nation (Ex. 19:4-6). According to Paul, although Israel's calling was unconditional (Rom. 11:1, 29) their continued belonging among the people of God was conditional on their response to Jesus (verses 22, 23; cf. Hos. 1:9, 10). <sup>56</sup>Further, see Clinton Wahlen, "Romans 11:26. Will All Jews Be Saved?" in Interpreting Scripture, 351-355. As the Old Testament makes clear, the land was never solely Israel's possession; it was God's land (Hos. 9:3; Jer. 2:7), a holy land (Ps. 78:54), and, therefore, was to keep a sabbath every seven years and could not be permanently sold (Lev. 25:2, 23). Israel's remaining in the land was conditional on obedience. Otherwise, it would be (and was) forfeited in their dispersion (Isa. 1:19, 20; Jer. 7:3-15) 57A still valuable treatment of this and related issues is Hans K. LaRondelle, The Israel of God in Prophecy: Principles of Prophetic Interpretation (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 1983), 135-146. GOP 117 1

Thus, Israel's return to the land also implied a spiritual return to the Lord (*Isa.* 10:20, 21; *Jer.* 23:5-8; cf. *Eze.* 37). As we have seen, an important aspect of the Isaianic Servant's mission was to bring about this return to God. Such a return, Jesus accomplished through the gathering of a "little flock" (*Luke* 12:32) or remnant (*Rom.* 9:27; 11:5) from Israel based on their response to Him. <sup>58On</sup> the remnant concept in the proclamations of John the Baptist and Jesus within the context of Second Temple Judaism, see Clinton Wahlen, "The Remnant in the Gospels," in Toward A Theology of the Remnant (Silver Spring, Md.: Biblical Research Institute, 2009), 61-84. According to the prophets, this newly reconstituted Israel would teach all nations (*Isa.* 2:2-4; *Mal.* 1:11) and include all nations (*Isa.* 66:19, 20; *Zech.* 8:20-23).GOP 117.2

The New Testament writers witness to this more inclusive Israel, where "there is neither Jew nor Greek . . . for you are all one in

Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise" (Gal. 3:28, 29; cf. Rom. 9:6). Thus Paul can speak of "the Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16) and of circumcision as "a matter of the heart" (Rom. 2:29), belonging to those who "glory in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:3); Peter can speak of Christians as "a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession" (1 Peter 2:9: cf. Ex. 19:6); and John can write of those on whose forehead is the name of the Father and the Lamb (Rev. 14:1) in evident contrast to "those who say they are Jews and are not" (Rev. 2:9; 3:9). Vivid images describing this new, unified Israel appear throughout the New Testament: one flock and one Shepherd (John 10:16); one olive tree (Rom. 11); one spiritual temple (Eph. 2): one eschatological virgin (Rev. 12)—capping all of these images is John's vision of the New Jerusalem having the names of the 12 tribes inscribed on its gates and the names of the 12 apostles inscribed on its foundations (Rev. 21:12, 14).GOP 117.3

#### Conclusion

Bible writers use Scripture in a variety of ways, but never is the historicity of any recorded event called into question. To the contrary, the entire narrative of biblical history is accepted as factual, including the accounts of Creation, the Fall, and the Flood. In a similar way, prophesied future events such as the judgment and the Second Coming are accepted as certain to happen and never questioned. Confidence in the unity, clarity, and historical veracity of Scripture underlie its citation by Bible writers. Close study of these quotations and how the Bible writers apply them show their understanding of the original (exegetical) intent as well as their awareness of the surrounding verses and how the passages they quote relate to the larger context of Scripture. GOP 118.1

The accounts of divine activity, both past and future, constitute sources for profound theological reflection with key images being utilized to describe divine activity in somewhat different but related ways. The Creation and the Exodus become motifs of future hope and salvation, because God's past activity illuminates how He acts in later times. Bible writers also indicate that certain persons, events, and institutions of the past bear a typological relationship to a future reality that more perfectly fulfills the divine purpose. In one case (1 Cor. 9:8-11), Scripture appears to be quoted rhetorically—using the language of the text but applying it differently from its original intent. However, upon closer inspection, it is also possible to perceive this instance as an exegetical use with an application in harmony with first-century norms for a literal interpretation of Scripture. GOP 118.2

Regarding prophecy, Bible writers show no hesitancy in accepting the predictive element, which is more prevalent than has sometimes been recognized. It is also present in the apocalyptic books of Daniel and Revelation, as distinguishable from general prophecy that characterizes most of the Old Testament prophets. The writers of the New Testament give special attention to the prophecies (and types) of the Messiah, including the Servant Songs of Isaiah, which in their original context appear to alternate between collective and individual significations. Old Testament prophecies concerning

Israel receive particular attention by New Testament writers, who seem to have discerned in Scripture the larger divine intention—that Israel was brought into existence as a nation to worship God and is first and foremost a spiritual entity. GOP 118.3

Nowhere in Scripture is it ever suggested that Israel would be reconstituted by God as a secular nation. To the contrary, the Israelites were repeatedly urged to respond in obedience to God's Word; thus they would be a blessing to the nations and equipped to teach them about the true God. This overarching principle carries over in the New Testament period in that Israel's response to Jesus Christ, who fulfilled the messianic hopes of the prophets, is determinative of the nation's future and of the individual's salvation. The brightest hopes envisaged in the Old Testament are fulfilled on a level that transcends this life and this present world. Especially in the book of Revelation we find these hopes, which before had amounted to only glimpses, re-presented in a fuller, grander way and on a universal, even cosmic scale. Thus it becomes clear that God's earlier promises recorded in His Word, far from being annulled or canceled, are gathered up and applied in such a way that "all Israel"—God's Israel—will be saved, and that a new heaven and a new earth in which righteousness dwells has been prepared especially for them. GOP 118.4

Finally, judging from the consistency and implicit trust with which Scripture is handled by the various Bible writers, both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament, it would seem reasonable to expect that any later inspired writers should employ a similar interpretative method. *GOP 119.1* 

# Chapter 5 - The Hebrew Prophets and the Literature of the Ancient Near East

#### Elias Brasil de Souza

Comparisons between the Bible and ancient Near Eastern literature have received significant scholarly attention and have contributed to a better understanding of the biblical world. In this endeavor a variety of perspectives and approaches have been brought to bear upon the biblical materials and their nonbiblical parallels. Some of these studies have proposed that the Bible is mostly a product of its ancient environment. 1See, e.g., John Day, Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 265, ed. David J. A. Clines and Philip R. Davies (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000); Israel Finkelstein and Neil Asher Silberman, The Bible Unearthed: Archaeology's New Vision of Ancient Israel and the Origin of Its Sacred Texts (New York: Free Press, 2001); Mark S. Smith, The Origins of Biblical Monotheism: Israel's Polytheistic Background and the Ugaritic Texts (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001). others, however, have advanced forceful arguments to show that in spite of similarities, the Bible stands as a distinct and original corpus of literature among its ancient counterparts. <sup>2See,</sup> e.g., Jeffrey J. Niehaus, Ancient Near Eastern Themes in Biblical Theology (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2008 [Kindle]); John N. Oswalt, The Bible Among the Myths (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009); John D. Currid. Against the Gods: The Polemical Theology of the Old Testament (Wheaton, III.: Crossway, 2013). GOP 120 1

This study focuses on the prophetic section of the Old Testament in order to identify possible allusions to nonbiblical texts. <sup>3According</sup> to a standard work, allusion is a "poet's deliberate incorporation of identifiable elements from other sources, preceding or contemporaneous, textual or extratextual" (Alex Preminger and T. V. F. Brogan, eds., The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics [Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993], 38, 39). This study adopts this definition with the observation that an "allusion" may not be always as "deliberate" as the description may imply. Close examination of the prophetic corpus indicates that the prophets were familiar with the neighboring nations and produced their literary works in interaction with, and oftentimes in reaction against,

the surrounding cultures. <sup>4Several</sup> references indicates familiarity with the cultures and political systems of the ancient Near East: Isaiah 10:8, NKJV ("Are not [Assyria's officers] kings?"), and Amos 1:5, NKJV ("the one who holds the scepter from Beth Eden"), for example, indicate familiarity with the Assyrian system of viceroys appointed with the full support of the Assyrian king (see Stephanie Dalley, "Assyrian Court Narratives in Aramaic and Egyptian: Historical Fiction," in Proceedings of the XIV Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale: Historiography in the Cuneiform World, ed. Tzvi Abusch, Paul-Alain Beaulieu, John Huehnergard, Peter Machinist, and Piotr Steinkeller [Bethesda, Md.: CDL Press, 2001, 151). Similar familiarity appears in prophets who were active during the Babylonian and Persian times. A few reasons may be suggested for such familiarity: First, we should reckon with the military and administrative presence of the major ancient Certain motifs, Near Eastern powers in Canaan throughout much its history (e.g., Isa. 36, 37 (par. 2 Kings 18:17-19:37). Second, trade and diplomatic relations may have facilitated access to literary texts and other documents that even if accessible only to the elite eventually reached broader segments of the local population. It has been noted that Judean embassies were sent to the Neo-Assyrian capitals to deliver tribute at least as early as 734 B.C. (see Shawn Zelig Aster, "The Image of Assyria in/saiah 2:5-22: The Campaign Motif Reversed." Journal of the American Oriental Society 127, no. 3 [2007]: 249). These delegations were guided through the Assyrian palaces and indoctrinated by means of exposure to the Assyrian art (see J. N. Postgate, Taxation and Conscription in the Assyrian Empire [Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1974l, 119-130). Third, the Assyrians established rock reliefs and royal stelae in the lands adjacent to and surrounding Judah. Fourth, some prophets, such as Ezekiel, may have had a direct exposure to a foreign culture. Fifth, cuneiform documents appear to have circulated in Palestine as attested by some archeological discoveries (See Wavne Horowitz. Takavoshi Oshima, and Seth L. Sanders, Cuneiform in Canaan: Cuneiform Sources From the Land of Israel in Ancient Times [Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2006]). Thus either by means of direct contact with written documents or through oral exposure to the propaganda of the dominant powers, it may be assumed that large segments the Israelite and Judean population were familiar with the cultural motifs and texts of the large ancient Near Eastern environment phrases, and themes developed by the biblical prophets are also contained in earlier

nonbiblical texts. Thus, it is instructive to identify some of these parallels or allusions in order to suggest a theological and hermeneutical framework to explain them in the light of the inspiration and authority of the Scriptures. Although this paper explores only a few of all possible allusions or parallel attestations, the conclusions drawn from this sample may apply to the other cases as well. GOP 120.2

Three main sections make up the body of this study. The first section identifies parallel motifs and phrases; the second, parallel theological themes, and the third addresses the theological and hermeneutical implications of such parallels. *GOP 121.1* 

# **Literary Allusions**

This section shows how some phrases and motifs used in prophetic oracles evoke the diction of ancient Near Eastern royal propaganda, vassal treaties, and Ugaritic texts. GOP 121.2

# **Royal Propaganda**

Isaiah 1:7 announced the devastation of the land using language that closely resembles ancient Near Eastern royal annals: "Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire; strangers devour your land in your presence." 5Biblical passages are from the New King James Version. Although such announcements of destruction occur elsewhere in the Old Testament, the sequence of lemmas —desolate, burn, fire, devour, it—is unique to this passage. Intriguingly, a similar phraseology appears in Assyrian royal inscriptions 6See Peter Machinist, "Assyria and Its Image in the First Isaiah," Journal of the American Oriental Society 103, no. 4 (1983): 719-737; Shalom M. Paul. "Deutero-Isaiah and Cuneiform Royal Inscriptions." Journal of the American Oriental Society 88, no. 1 (1968): 180-186. from Tiglath Pileser I (1114-1076 B.C.) through Sargon II (721-705 B.C.). One particular example, found in the Annals of Ashurnasirpal II (883-859 B.C.), in which the king brags about the destruction of Kaprabi, deserves notice: "The city I laid waste, I destroyed, I burned with fire. I consumed it " 7L. W. King and E. A. Wallis Budge, Annals of the Kings of Assyria (British Museum, Department of Egyptian and Assyrian Antiquities, 1902), 362, par. 54. Available at www.lib.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/eos/eos page.pl? DPI=100&callnum=PJ3835 .B85\_cop2&ident=i. We should note that the meaning and word sequence laid waste/destroyed, burned. consumed, it, closely resembles Isaiah 1:7. 8Machinist, 724. GOP 121.3

In the same vein, Isaiah quotes the Assyrian king to convey the aims of his conquest: "Also I have removed the boundaries of the people, and have robbed their treasuries" (*Isa. 10:13*). Admittedly this phrase occurs in several other places in the Old Testament. However, it has been noted that in all other cases it alludes to *Deuteronomy 19:14* (cf. Isa. 27:17), which forbids individuals from

extending property by removing the landmarks of their neighbors. Only in *Isaiah 10:13* does the phrase refer to the territorial extension of an empire. Thus it may be reasonable to surmise that Isaiah was familiar with expressions such as the following excerpt from an inscription of Tiglath-Pileser III (745-727 B.C.): "Sarrabani (and) Bit-Sa'alli I laid waste (*lit.*, tore up) to their farthest borders. . . . Those lands I brought within the Assyrian borders." <sup>9Daniel David</sup> Luckenbill, Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1926), 1:290. *GOP 122 1* 

Another passage worthy of consideration uses the metaphors of flooding waters and overwhelming glory to depict the Assyrian king coming against Judah: "Now therefore, behold, the Lord brings up over them the waters of the River, strong and mighty—the king of Assyria and all his glory; he will go up over all his channels and go over all his banks. He will pass through Judah, he will overflow and pass over, he will reach up to the neck; and the stretching out of his wings will fill the breadth of Your land. O Immanuel" (Isa. 8:7, 8). The metaphor of water to portray the invading army and the motif of the glory of the foreign king may allude to similar concepts in Assvrian inscriptions. As for the image of waters, it shall suffice to note that Salmanaser III (858-824 B.C.) bragged: "I rained down upon them a devastating flood. I piled them in ditches (and) filled the extensive plain with the corpses of their warriors." 10William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger, Context of Scripture (Boston: Brill, 2003), 2:262. Subsequently herein referred to as CS. Isaiah made the motif even more explicit by tying it to the River, a reference to the Euphrates, the most significant river of Assyria. As regards the concept of glory, several documents refer to the glory and majesty of the Assyrian monarch. Assurnasirpal (883-859 B.C.) referred to himself as "the king of glory." And Shalmaneser III (858-824 B.C.) claimed that he wrote on the cliff of a mountain "the glory of my might, the triumphs (lit., ways, issues) of my power." 11Luckenbill, 42. Thus. by referring to waters and glory to portray the overwhelming power of the Assyrian king, the prophet may have had in mind the language and imagery of Assyrian inscriptions. GOP 122.2

Isaiah described how the Assyrian king perceived himself using imagery of the monarch going to the west and ascending to the

mountains to cut down the prized timber of Lebanon. Such depiction conveys more than the successful accomplishment of building projects. In effect, the motif of such an "heroic journey" <sup>12See Machinist, 724.</sup> conveys the long reach of the king's military power, which Isaiah thus quotes: "By the multitude of my chariots I have come up to the height of the mountains, to the limits of Lebanon; I will cut down its tall cedars and its choice cypress trees; I will enter its farthest height, to its fruitful forest" (*Isa. 37:24*). It is striking that a Neo-Assyrian inscription attributed to Salmanaser III (858-824 B.C.) closely parallels the speech reported above: "I climbed Mt. Amanus (and) cut down beams of cedar (and) juniper. I marched to Mt. Atalur, where the image of Anum-hirbe stands. (And) I erected my image with his image." <sup>13CS, 2:262</sup>. GOP 122.3

In another occurrence of this motif, the prophet predicted of Yahweh what the Assyrian king claimed for himself. In *Isaiah 41:19* the Lord promises: "I will plant in the wilderness the cedar and the acacia tree, the myrtle and the oil tree; I will set in the desert the cypress tree and the pine and the box tree together." So whereas the Assyrian king could at most claim to have the power to reach the mountains of Lebanon and cut off their timber, the Lord's claim surpassed by far that of the pagan monarch. The Lord, as Creator God, would make cedar and others trees grow in the desert so that the nations would understand that "the hand of the Lord has done this, and the Holy One of Israel has created it" (verse 20).*GOP 123.1* 

Thus, although the motif of the heroic journey is part of the larger Mesopotamian tradition and occurs elsewhere in the prophetic corpus (*Hab. 2:17*), the well-formed evocation of this motif in Isaiah, which seems to be the earliest occurrence within the Old Testament, may indicate that Isaiah must have "learned of it through Neo-Assyrian channels." <sup>14Machinist, 724</sup>. In addition, as we have noted, the same motif also emerges in Isaiah to underscore God's unsurpassing might, which would accomplish exceedingly more than a pagan king ever could. *GOP 123.2* 

Isaiah also announced that the nations would bring the scattered exiles "for an offering [minha] to the Lord out of all nations, on horses and in chariots and in litters, on mules and on camels, to My

holy mountain Jerusalem" (/sa. 66:20). This list of horses, chariots, litters, mules, and camels, which is referred to as an offering/tribute to the Lord, echoes some lists in which a monarch recounts the tribute received from foreign nations. Many of such lists come from the Assyrians. 15See Shalom M. Paul, "Deutero-Isaiah and Cuneiform Royal Inscriptions," Journal of the American Oriental Society 88, no. 1 (1968): 184. 28 exemplified by an inscription that mentions the "horses, mules, Bactrian camels, cattle (and) sheep" brought to Tiglath-pileser III (745-727) "regularly on an annual basis in the land of Assyria." 16CS, 2:287. It also bears mentioning a stela celebrating the military accomplishments of Thuthmose III, which lists tribute brought from Canaan to the pharaoh: "Then that feeble enemy and his chieftains who were with him had all their children sent out to my majesty with gifts and bearing much tribute of gold and silver, all their horses which were with them, their magnificent chariots of gold and silver. and those which were undecorated, all their mail armor, their bows, their arrows, and all their weapons of combat." 17lbid.,16. Thus coming back to Isaiah 66:20, we may suggest that the prophet may have phrased his text according to tribute lists in which the king celebrates the success of his military campaigns. By the use of such literary style, the message reaches the audience with undeniable rhetorical force. As human kings imposed tributes upon conquered enemies, so the Lord would defeat His enemies and force them to bring the scattered captives back to the land, as an offering/tribute to Him. GOP 123.3

## **Lion Motif**

Also categorized as royal propaganda, the lion motif receives a separate section in this paper, given its detailed elaboration on the prophetic literature. Some prophetic texts show remarkable similarities with Assyrian and Egyptian documents (cf. *Isa. 15:9*; *Jer. 2:15*; *4:7*; *50:17*) in which the lion occurs as stereotypical imagery. Egyptian, Babylonian, and Assyrian kings<sup>18Willy Hartner and</sup> Richard Ettinghausen. "The Conquering Lion, the Life Cycle of a Symbol," Oriens 17 (1964): 161-171. often portrayed themselves as lions and often boasted of engagement in the royal sport of lion hunting, as shown mainly in palace decoration <sup>19See</sup> Othmar Keel, The Symbolism of the Biblical World: Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of Psalms (New

York: Seabury Press, 1978), 85-89. and royal documents. <sup>20See</sup> Brent Allen Strawn, "'What Is Stronger Than a Lion?' Leonine Image and Metaphor in the Old Testament and the Ancient Near East" (Ph.D. diss., Princeton Theological Seminary, 2001), 184-319. Nebmaatre, king of Upper and Lower Egypt, claimed to be "the mighty lion, beloved of Amun." <sup>21William</sup> J. Murnane and Edmund S. Meltzer, Texts From the Amarna Period in Egypt, Writings From the Ancient World, vol. 5 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 217. Fsarhadom (680-669 B.C.), king of Assyria, boasted: "I became enraged like a lion, my emotions were stirred up. I banged my hands together for the sake of exercising the kingship of my father's house." 22Martti Nissinen. Robert Kriech Ritner, C. L. Seow, and Peter Machinist, Prophets and Prophecy in the Ancient Near East, Writings From the Ancient World, vol. 12 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 139. And Ashurbanipal came to be regarded as a benefactor of humanity, given his ability to destroy lions. 23Maximilian Strecl, Assurbanipal und die letzten assyrischen könige bis zum untergange Niniveh's (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1916),  $37_{GOP}$ 124 1

Some prophets skillfully resorted to the lion motif in order to emphasize the rhetorical force of their message. In some cases this may reflect merely the stereotypical imagery of the lion, which was common to the ancient Near East. However, other occurrences of this motif seem to allude to particular descriptions of ancient Near Eastern kings as mighty lions. <sup>24</sup>Gordon H. Johnston, "Nahum's Rhetorical Allusions to the Neo-Assyrian Lion Motif," Bibliotheca Sacra 158, no. 631 (2001): 286-307. GOP 124.2

Hosea, for example, exhibits intriguing familiarity with the royal lion motif as used by Neo- Assyrian kings. In his invective against Israel, the prophet portrays the Lord as a lion ready to tear up its prey: "For I will be like a lion to Ephraim, and like a young lion to the house of judah. I, even I, will tear them and go away; I will take them away, and no one shall rescue. I will return again to My place till they acknowledge their offense. Then they will seek My face; in their affliction they will earnestly seek Me" (Hos. 5:14, 15). At first glance it appears that Hosea is merely using stereotypical language to depict God's imminent judgment of Israel. However, the fact that God would use the Assyrians as instruments to execute His

judgment (see *Hos. 5:13*; 7:11; 8:9; 9:13; 10:6; 11:5, 11; 12:1; 14:3) indicates that Hosea was most likely using an ironic allusion to the well-known fact that the Assyrians often portrayed their military accomplishments as a lion attacking its prey. Interestingly, the Assyrian kings related to the prophetic oracles of Hosea (Tiglath-Pileser III, Shalmaneser V, and Sargon II) depicted themselves as lions in their royal annals. <sup>25lbid., 295.</sup> In a twist of irony, the prophet announces that the judgment would ultimately be carried out by God, the supreme lion, who "would use these Assyrian 'lions' to execute His judgment." <sup>26lbid.</sup> *GOP 124.3* 

A sustained use of the lion motif appears in Nahum as the prophet announces the demise of the Assyrian empire: GOP 125.1

Where is the dwelling of the lions, and the feeding place of the young lions, where the lion walked, the lioness and lion's cub, and no one made them afraid? The lion tore in pieces enough for his cubs, killed for his lionesses, filled his caves with prey, and his dens with flesh. "Behold, I am against you," says the Lord of hosts, "I will burn your chariots in smoke, and the sword shall devour your young lions; I will cut off your prey from the earth, and the voice of your messengers shall be heard no more" (*Nahum 2:11-13*). GOP 125.2

In this pericope the prophet portrays the Lord as a lion hunter. Ironically, the Lord Himself, the ultimate lion hunter, would hunt the Assyrians and their kings who depicted themselves as royal lions. The historical context and the purpose of the book of Nahum suggest that the prophet may have made intentional allusion to Assyrian inscriptions. We should note that most likely Nahum was a contemporary of Ashurbanipal (668-627), <sup>27See Robert B. Chisholm, Jr.,</sup> Handbook on the Prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Minor Prophets (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 427; Moisés Silva and Merrill Chapin Tenney, eds., The Zondervan Encyclopedia of the Bible (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), H-L, 822 a king who often portrayed himself as a lion hunter. <sup>28See</sup> Grant Frame and A. Kirk Grayson, "An Inscription of Ashurbanipal Mentioning the Kidinnu of Sippar," State Archives of Assyria Bulletin 8, no. 2 (1994): 3-12. In addition, the Lord called Nahum to announce the downfall of the Assyrian Empire. Thus, it comes as no surprise that, to convey his message in a more effective way. Nahum made

rhetorical use of the Assyrian royal propaganda<sup>29See</sup> Maximilian Streck, Assurbanipal und die letzten assyrischen könige bis zum untergange Niniveh's (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1916), 51-54; A. Kirk Grayson, "Assyrian Royal Inscriptions: Literary Characteristics," in Assyrian Royal Inscriptions: New Horizons, ed. F. M. Fales (Rome: Istituto per l'Orient, 1981), 45-to announce the hunting of those who regarded themselves as the greatest hunters. *GOP* 125.3

In an oracle against Egypt (Eze. 32:1-15), Ezekiel condemns the pharaoh by saying, "You are like a young lion among the nations" (verse 2). Such language betrays familiarity with the Egyptian use of the lion imagery as propaganda to promote the power and majesty of the pharaoh. But Ezekiel uses lion imagery to portray the weakness and not the power of the pharaoh. Rather than a majestic lion ready to devour its prey, the Egyptian king appears as a repugnant crocodile soon to be captured and slain: "'You are like a young lion among the nations, and you are like a monster in the seas, bursting forth in your rivers, troubling the waters with your feet, and fouling their rivers.' Thus says the Lord God: 'I will therefore spread My net over you with a company of many people. and they will draw you up in My net' " (verses 2, 3). Therefore, Judah's hope that Egypt could support them against the Babylonians had no firm basis. In spite of his claim to be a lion, the pharaoh would be hunted down like a crocodile. GOP 125.4

#### Vassal Treaties

Some other connections between prophetic literature and ancient Near Eastern texts emerge in the parallels between Assyrian treaty curses and announcements of judgment in the prophets. Some studies have concluded that the prophets drew on the ancient treaty-curse genre to express judgment. <sup>30</sup>See George E. Mendenhall, "Covenant Forms in Israelite Tradition," Biblical Archaeologist 17 (1954): 50-76; idem, "Covenant," in Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, ed. George A. Buttrick (Nashville: Abingdon, 1986), 1:720; Riekele Borger, "Zu den Asarhaddon-Vertagen," Zeitschrift für Assyriologie 54 (1961): 173-196; Delbert R. Hillers, Treaty-Curses and the Old Testament Prophets (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1964); Kevin J. Cathcarty, "Treaty-Curses and the Book of Nahum," Catholic Biblical Quarterly 35, no.2 (1973): 179-187; Gordon H. Johnston,

"Nahum's Rhetorical Allusions to Neo-Assyrian Treaty Curses." Bibliotheca Sacra 158, no. 632 (2001): 415-436. In particular the curses against Assyria announced by Nahum exhibit significant parallels with Neo-Assyrian treaty curses. These latter documents differ from other extrabiblical sources inasmuch as they contain maledictions that are extensive, specific, vivid, and distinctive 31Dennis J. McCarthy, Treaty and Covenant (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1981), 67. Since Assyrian kings delivered their diplomatic messages not only to the king but also to the population (cf. 2 Kings 18:26-36), 32See John S. Holladay, "Assyrian Statecraft and the Prophets of Israel," Harvard Theological Review 63, no. 1 (1970): 29-51. one may presume that the prophet must have known such documents or traditions and intentionally drew from them to frame his invectives against the Assyrian enemy. In this regard, the following parallels between Nahum and the Vassal Treaties of Esarhaddon 33D. J. Wiseman, "The Vassal-Treaties of Esarhaddon," Iraq 1 (1958): 1-99. (VTE) deserve notice: 34See Johnston, "Nahum's Rhetorical Allusions to Neo-Assyrian Treaty Curses," 415-436. (1) curse of darkness (Nahum 1:8 and VTE 422-424); (2) destruction of seed and name (Nahum 1:14 and VTE 543, 544); (3) destruction of chariots (Nahum 2:13 and VTE 612-616); (4) punishment of prostitutes (Nahum 3:5-7 and VTE 617); (5) incurable wound and fatal disease (Nahum 3:19 and VTE 472-477); (6) overwhelming flood (Nahum 1:8 and VTE 442); (7) drying up of water sources (Nahum 1:4 and VTE 440, 441); (8) skin color changed (Nahum 2:10 and VTE 585-587); (9) silencing of one's voice (Nahum 2:13 and VTE 437-439); (10) retaliation by the avenger (Nahum 1:3 and VTE 576, 577; 582-584). In addition, the curses of warriors acting like fearful women (Nahum 3:13) and a locust plaque (verses 15-17), albeit absent from VTE, are attested in other documents dated to Neo-Assyrian times 35For warriors acting like fearful women, see Hillers, 66-68; for locust plague, see Joseph A. Fitzmyer, The Aramaic Inscriptions of Sefire: Commentary (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1995), 45 (IA, 27-32). GOP 126 1

At this juncture the question emerges whether Nahum consciously alluded to extrabiblical sources or merely used stock language and imagery of the ancient Near East without regard to specific documents or traditions. Although this question resists absolute certainty, the combined effect of some lines of evidence favors the

possibility that Nahum may have intentionally alluded to Assyrian treaty curses in order to achieve some sort of rhetorical effect. First, we should note the genre similarities inasmuch as the parallels between Nahum and the extrabiblical documents occur in the domain of treaty curses. 36See Johnston, "Nahum's Rhetorical Allusions to Neo-Assyrian Treaty Curses," 434. Second, although in isolation any of the noted motifs may have a number of parallels with other ancient Near Eastern documents, the number of parallels between Nahum and the VTE are much higher than with any other single document of the ancient Near East, which can hardly be mere coincidence. Third, considering that Nahum announced the demise of the Assyrian Empire, he may have intentionally used imagery and language borrowed from the Assyrians themselves to underscore the rhetorical force of his message, emphasizing that "the treaty curses that the Assyrians threatened to invoke on Judah would be the very judgments Yahweh would invoke on the Assyrians." 37lbid.<sub>GOP</sub> 127 1

## **Ugaritic Literature**

A striking verbal parallel with an extrabiblical text occurs in *Isaiah* 27:1, a pericope portraying God's eschatological judgment and ultimate victory over the forces of evil: "In that day the Lord with His severe sword, great and strong, will punish Leviathan [liwyatan] the fleeing [bariah] serpent, Leviathan [liwyatan] that twisted [altn] serpent; and He will slay the reptile that is in the sea." Space restrictions do not allow a detailed discussion of this verse, but for the purpose of this study we shall note its verbal parallels to an Ugaritic text in which Mot mentions an earlier victory of Baal over Litan (=Leviathan), 38See James Todd Hibbard, "Intertextuality in Isaiah 24-27: The Reuse and Evocation of Earlier Texts and Traditions" (Ph.D. diss., University of Notre Dame, 2003), 237. The Ugaritic passage reads as follows: "When you killed Litan (Itn), the Fleeing (brh) Serpent, Annihilated the Twisty (qltn) Serpent, The Potentate with Seven Heads . . . " 39Mark S. Smith and Simon B. Parker, Ugaritic Narrative Poetry, Writings From the Ancient World, vol. 9 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 141 (KTU 1.5 I 1-4).<sub>GOP</sub> 127.2

Both texts share so specific a vocabulary that the Isaianic passage

has been presumed to be a "virtual quotation" from the Ugaritic text. Literary borrowing, however, should be ruled out given the time gap between the Ugaritic text (c. 1400-1200 B.C.) and the Isaianic passage (c. 850 B.C.). But the evident similarities require some explanation, which will be more fully developed in the last section of this study. For now, it may be suggested that the prophet may have been familiar with the shared imagery or notion that the serpent (or Leviathan, for that matter), would eventually be destroyed. So while the Ugaritic text expressed this idea in mythical or polytheistic terms, Isaiah elaborated the same motif within the framework of true monotheistic religion. GOP 127.3

A final example comes from Hosea, where it appears that the prophet utilizes imagery and expressions found in Ugaritic literature to press home his warning against the apostasy of God's people as they, among other sins, turned to Baal worship (see Hos. 2:8; 13:1). In this connection we note that Hosea refers to the death and resurrection of Israel in ways that resemble what is known of Baal in the Ugaritic texts. Let us examine a couple of passages. "After two days He will revive us; on the third day He will raise us up, that we may live in His sight" (Hos. 6:2). 40For a detailed study of this passage, see John Day, "Resurrection Imagery From Baal to the Book of Daniel," in Congress Volume: Cambridge, 1995, ed. J. A. Emerton (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 125-133. Subsequently, Hosea reported God saying: "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death. O Death, I will be your plagues! O Grave, I will be your destruction!" (Hos. 13:14). And the next verse portrays the drying up of the springs and fountains of water (verse 15). GOP 128.1

It is striking that the imagery of death, resurrection, and drought evokes the depiction of Baal in the Ugaritic texts: Baal died—which resulted in drought—and resurrected every year in the spring. Such imagery appears to be reflected in the way Hosea describes the fate of Israel. Such parallels may indicate that the prophet may have used such language as a polemic against Baal worship. Because the people turned to Baal, they would share the presumed fate of Baal. That is, their turning to the fertility cult of Baal resulted in death instead of life; in drought instead of fertility. However, in spite of their sins God had a message of hope. Upon repentance, God was capable of accomplishing for His people what Baal could

never do: He would life.GOP 128.2	raise	them	up	from	death	and	give	them	new

# **Theological Allusions**

Parallels between the Hebrew prophets and ancient Near Eastern literature are not confined to simple phrases and motifs but may include significant theological themes, such as the day of the Lord, end of evil, resurrection, messianic hope, end of death, and eschatological banquet. This section attempts to explore these themes with attention to similarities and distinctions. *GOP* 128.3

#### Day of the Lord

The idea of a day when God would judge the nations, bring evil to an end, and inaugurate an age of peace and prosperity occurs nearly 200 times in the prophets. 41According to Richard H. Hiers, "Day of the Lord," in David Noel Freedman, ed., Anchor Bible Dictionary (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 2:82. Amos, the earliest prophet to mention this idea, portrays the day of the Lord as a day of judgment for God's people (Amos 5:18-20; cf. Ex. 32:34). Some prophets emphasize the day of the Lord as a punishment against the nations (e.g., Isa. 13:6-13: 24:21; Jer. 25:33; Oba. 15, 16), while others look for that day as new exodus (e.g., Joel 2:20) 42See Duane A. Garrett, Hosea, Joel, The New American Commentary, vol. 19A (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1997), 370; Richard D. Patterson, "Wonders in the Heavens and on the Earth: Apocalyptic Imagery in the Old Testament," Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society 43, no. 3 (2000): 390; William J. Dumbrell, The Faith of Israel: A Theological Survey of the Old Testament, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 123. or a day that God would restore the fortunes of His people and usher an age of happiness and abundant blessings under His own rule (Isa. 2:2-4; 29:18, 19; 11:10; Mic. 4:6, 7). As for the origins of the day of the Lord, scholars have hypothesized such various explanations as theophany, enactment of covenant treaty curses, enthronement festivals, holy war, or different combinations of these 43J. D. Barker, "Day of the Lord," in Mark J. Boda and Gordon J. McConville, eds., Dictionary of the Old Testament: Prophets (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic; InterVarsity Press, 2012), 134-136. In spite of scholarly efforts no consensus has emerged, which makes the question of origins a moot point in this discussion. GOP 128.4

And yet we should turn to some extrabiblical texts where a similar

theme appears. A number of Sumerian, Hittite, Egyptian, and Semitic texts from a variety of places and times exhibit the idea that a great king or sovereign could successfully undertake a military campaign or an entire war of conquest in a single day. <sup>44See Douglas</sup> Stuart, "The Sovereign's Day of Conquest," Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research 221 (1976): 159-164. Such military enterprise would result in territorial expansion but could also involve vengeance against enemy nations. <sup>45See ibid.</sup> A few references should suffice to demonstrate how this idea was portrayed in nonbiblical literature. *GOP 129.1* 

In the Autobiography of Idrimi (fifteenth century B.C.), the king of Alalakh claims that in "one day, like one man, Niya, Amae, Mukis, and Alalah, my city, turned to me. My allies heard and came before me. When they made a treaty with me, I established them as my allies." 46CS, 1:479. A Hittite text known as "The Deeds of Suppiluliuma" (fourteenth century B.C.) reads: "He had besieged it for seven days. Then on the eighth day he fought a battle against it for one day and [took (?)] it in a terrific battle on the eighth day, in [one] day." 47lbid., 190. In a letter to the pharaoh at Amarna, RibHadd of Byblos requests: "Send the royal archers, and the entire land will be taken in a day." 4848. William L. Moran, The Amarna Letters, Englishlanguage ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), EA 132. In a stele, Seti I (c. 1318-1301 B.C.) states the following about his battle against a coalition of Asiatic princes: "When the space of a day had passed, they were overthrown to the glory of his majesty, the King of Upper and Lower Egypt: Men-maat-Re; the Son of Re: Seti Merne-Ptah, given life." <sup>49</sup>James Bennett Pritchard, ed., The Ancient Near East an Anthology of Texts and Pictures, 3rd ed. with supplement (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1969), 253, 254. In the Moabite Stone (c. 830) B.C.), King Mesha boasts: "And Kemosh said to me: 'Go, take Nebo from Israel!' And I went in the night, and I fought against it from the break of dawn until noon, and I took it, and I killed [its] whole population." 50CS, 2:138. The inscription of Kuntillet 'Ajrud 18 refers to the melting of mountains, crushing of peaks, and concludes: "for the blessed one of the Lord on the day of bat[tle] for the name of God on the day of batt[le]." 51F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp, J.J.M. Roberts, C. L. Seow, and R. E. Whitaker, eds., Hebrew Inscriptions: Texts From the Biblical

Period With Concordance (New Haven, Conn.: Yale Press, 2005), 234 (KAjr 15 [Plaster], lines 5, 6). GOP 129.2

In spite of similarities, some crucial differences emerge. First, in the prophets the day of the Lord indicates God's intervention in history, while in the ancient Near East the day is mainly related to the accomplishments of a human king. Second, the prophets focus on the imminence of the day of the Lord, whereas extrabiblical texts tend to emphasize the duration of that day, namely, the king could smash the enemy in a single day. Third, the prophets convey this idea through prophetic oracles announcing a future event, while nonbiblical texts use different genres, that is, mythological texts, or royal propaganda pointing to a past event. Such distinctions. nonetheless, the fact remains that a similar concept was somehow at home in the ancient Near East, in which case it may have served as a backdrop for the proclamation of the prophetic message of the day of the Lord. While ancient Near Eastern kings boasted of achieving victory over the enemy in a single day, the prophets announced that God Himself would intervene in history to defeat evil and establish His everlasting kingdom in the "day of the Lord."GOP 129.3

#### End of Evil

Classical prophets portray an idyllic picture of the earth as a restored paradise where evil would reign no more and humans would live in peace with one another and in harmony with nature. A typical case comes from Isaiah: GOP 130.1

The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play by the cobra's hole, and the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea (*Isa. 11:6-9*; cf. *Isa. 2:4*; 65:25; Eze. 34:25; Hos. 2:18).GOP 130.2

Interestingly, the Sumerian myth of Enki and Ninhursag describes a situation in which the "lion kills not" and "the wolf snatches not the lamb." <sup>52Pritchard, 38, lines 15, 16.</sup> Another Sumerian text, "Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta," also expresses a similar idea: *GOP 130.3* 

"One day there will be no snake, no scorpion,
There will be no hyena, nor lion,
There will be neither (wild) dog nor wolf,
And thus there will be neither fear nor trembling,
For man will then have no enemy.
On that day the lands of Subur and Hamazi,
As well as twin-tongued Sumer—great mound of
the power of lordship— Together with Akkad—the mound that has
all that is befitting—

And even the land Martu, resting in green pastures,

Yea, the whole world of well-ruled people,

Will be able to speak to Enlil in one language!" <sup>53H.L.J.</sup> Vanstiphout and Jerrold S. Cooper, Epics of Sumerian Kings: The Matter of Aratta, Writings From the Ancient World, vol. 20 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), <sup>65.</sup>GOP 130.4

Such similarities indicate that longing for harmony with nature and other human beings, and a consequent life of peace and security, was not restricted to the Israelites, but was a hope also harbored by some non-Israelite poets and sages. Thus, the singularity of this prophetic theme does not lie primarily in the novelty of the idea, but in its articulation within the framework of biblical monotheism and the history of salvation as revealed in the Scriptures. While in the texts of the ancient Near East the notion of a perfect place of peace and security emerges mainly in mythical texts with no clear focus on how and through whom that paradise can be achieved, the prophets situate the end of evil and restoration of all things in the context of God's overarching plan to restore creation to its original state and purpose. GOP 131.1

#### Resurrection

The resurrection of the dead constitutes one of the climactic themes of prophetic eschatology. <sup>54See</sup> Gerhard F. Hasel, "Resurrection in the

Theology of Old Testament Apocalyptic," Journal Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 92, no. 2 (1980): 267-284. Although not a pervasive theme in the Old Testament, such passages as Isaiah 26:19; Hosea 6:2; Ezekiel 37:1-14; and Daniel 12:2, 13 clearly show that belief in a resurrection was part of the prophetic message. <sup>55For</sup> an recent overview of this theme in the Old Testament as whole, see Jon Paulien. "The Resurrection and the Old Testament: A Fresh Look in Light of Recent Research." Journal of the Adventist Theological Society 24, no. 1 (2013): 3-24. Even if in some cases resurrection indicates national restoration rather than raising an individual from the dead, the fact remains that the prophets affirmed that God had power to raise people from the dead and that therefore death could be overcome. For this reason they could conceive of the resurrection in both national and individual terms. Although some episodes involving resurrection in the former prophets (see 1 Kings 17:17-24, 2 Kings 4:31-37, 13:20, 21) provide a canonical backdrop to the resurrection faith in the prophets, we need to recognize the presence of this concept in nonbiblical texts of the ancient Near East to place the prophetic message against a larger backdrop. <sup>56See</sup> Tryggve N. D. Mettinger, The Riddle of Resurrection: "Dying and Rising Gods" in the Ancient Near East, Coniectanea Biblica, vol. 50, ed. Tryggve N. D. Mettinger and Stig I. L. Norin (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 2001). GOP 131 2

As attested in the Ugaritic literature (1400-1200 B.C.), the belief of the dying and rising of the god Baal was known in ancient Canaan. According to the Baal cycle of texts, Baal experienced a seasonal resurrection after being killed by Mot (death). 57Day, "Resurrection Imagery From Baal to the Book of Daniel," 125-133. A similar concept was with attested in Mesopotamia the dvina and risina Tammuz/Dumuzi. <sup>58See Mettinger, 213.</sup> In a text fragment from Ugarit, likely adapted from a Mesopotamian original, an individual says: "My sisters sprinkled me with fine (?) oil from the press. Until the Lord raised my head, and brought me back to life from the dead, until Marduk raised my head and brought me back to life from the dead." 59CS, 1:486. The Hittites also appear to have embraced the idea that—in addition to the emperor becoming a god upon his death—there could be a personal resurrection for a vassal king, as in expressions such as "you have awakened me to life," which although figurative seems to have a background in some idea of

resurrection. <sup>60</sup>Emst F. Weidner, Politische Dokumente aus Kleinasien (Boghazköi-Studien, Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1970), 42, 43 (verse 28); 128, 129 (verse 24), as quoted in Niehaus, Kindle, loc. 1727. In Egypt similar ideas occur mainly in connection with the god Osiris. <sup>61</sup>See E. A. Wallis Budge, Osiris and the Egyptian Religion of Resurrection (London: Philip Lee Warner, 1911), 1:1-23; M. Heerma van Voss, "Osiris," in Karel van der Toorn, Bob Becking, and Pieter W. van der Horst, eds., Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible (Leiden, Brill, 1999), 650. GOP 131 3

So as the prophets announced the resurrection hope, they were not proclaiming an absolutely novel idea, but were reframing and refocusing an old hope within the framework of God's revelation. according to which the all-powerful God is capable of overcoming death. This was not the case with several deities portrayed in ancient Near Eastern myths. Such deities could never claim omnipotence since they were subject to the impersonal forces of the cosmos. <sup>62Oswalt, 59</sup>. In addition, some ancient Near Eastern deities could experience death and rebirth according to the seasonal cycle of vegetation. Furthermore, ancient Near Eastern texts portray the resurrection mostly as a privilege of gods and kings (there is little evidence that common people could experience resurrection). 63Although this may be a result of the fragmentary nature of the evidence as preserved in the epigraphic records. In addition, it may be that common people may have had some hint of this hope, but given the nature of the transmission of ancient cultural processes, they left no records of their beliefs. In contrast, the prophets present the resurrection as a hope for the nation (e.g., Eze. 37) and for individuals as well (e.g., Dan. 12:2). According to the prophetic testimony, resurrection and life beyond the grave is not a privilege to be granted to deities and kings, but a hope offered to all. GOP 132.1

### Messianic Hope

Among messages of doom, the prophets delivered messages of hope about a future king who would bring justice and peace to the land. Based on the Davidic covenant, <sup>64</sup>See Martin Tennison Akins, "The Theological Influence of the Davidic Covenant on the Biblical Understanding of the Messiah" (Ph.D. diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1995),

211-221. such prophetic oracles announced the coming of a righteous king who would rule according to God's will. From several messianic oracles (e.g., Isa. 7:10-16; Mic. 5:1-5; Amos 9:11-15; Jer. 33:14-18; Eze, 37:24-28; Hag, 2:20-23), two may be singled out for the sake of exemplification: "There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots" (Isa. 11:1); " 'Behold, the days are coming,' says the Lord, 'that I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; a King shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell safely; now this is His He will THF name bv which he called: LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS' " (Jer. 23:5, 6).GOP 132.2

Such announcements of hope in the coming of an ideal ruler have some interesting parallels in the nonbiblical literature. Texts from Egypt and Mesopotamia predict kings coming to power who will be successful in bringing peace, justice, and prosperity, though these oracles were usually written after the king sat on the throne as means of legitimating his rule. 65Victor Harold Matthews, Mark W. Chavalas, and John H. Walton, The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament, electronic ed. (Downers Grove, III.: InterVarsity Press, 2000), on Isaiah 11:1. A few excerpts shall suffice to exemplify the tenor of these messages. The Marduk prophecy 66This text refers to events in the twelfth century B.C. Matthew Neujahr, Predicting the Past in the Ancient Near East: Mantic Historiography in Ancient Mesopotamia, Judah, and the Mediterranean World, Brown Judaic Studies 354 (Providence: Brown Judaic Studies, 2012), 26. thus reads: GOP 133.1

19. A king of Babylon will arise; 20. the wondrous temple, 21. Ekursagila, he will renew. 22. The plans of heaven and earth 23. he will draw in Ekursagila; 24. he will double its height. (Tax) exemptions 25. he will establish for my city Babylon. 26. He will lead me to my city Babylon 27. and he will return [me] to eternal Ekursagila. <sup>67lbid., 31.</sup>GOP 133.2

The Ex Eventu Prophecy Text A says: GOP 133.3

2. [A prince will arise] and [will exercise] king[ship] for 18 years. 3. The land will dwell securely; the midst of the land will be well; the

people [will experience] prosperity.] 4. The gods will issue good decisions for the land; the winds will be favorable. 5. The yield of the . . . and the yield of the furrow will be abundant. 6. Shakkan and Nisaba will . . . in the land. <sup>68lbid., 15</sup>.GOP 133.4

According to the Uruk prophecy, "16. After him a king, his son, will arise in the midst of Uruk, and he will rule the four quarters (of the world). 17. He will exercise [ruler]ship and kingship in the midst of Uruk; his dynasty will be established forever." <sup>69lbid., 53.</sup>GOP 133.5

As just noted, expressions of hope in a future king appear both in the Bible and in the non-biblical literature. Often forced to live under oppressive regimes, the biblical prophets and the nonbiblical sages longed for peace and security, which as they understood, could be provided only by an ideal king, capable of restoring the cosmic order. 70See John Baines, "Ancient Egyptian Kingship: Official Forms, Rhetoric, Context," in King and Messiah in Israel and the Ancient Near East: Proceedings of the Oxford Old Testament Seminar, ed. John Day, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 270 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 15-53; W. G. Lambert, "Kingship in Ancient Mesopotamia," in idem, 54-70. Parallel themes such as this do not indicate literary borrowing, but most likely belong to a shared cluster of ideas whose origins may go back to the beginning of human history. *GOP 133.6* 

#### End of Death

The graphic depiction of the end of death in Isaiah and Hosea shows some intriguing parallels with the portrayal of Mot (death) in the Ugaritic Baal cycle. According to Isaiah, the Lord "will destroy on this mountain the surface of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death forever, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces; the rebuke of His people He will take away from all the earth; for the Lord has spoken" (Isa. 25:7, 8). Hosea uses similar language and speaks of the "destruction" of death: "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death. O Death, I will be your plagues! O Grave, I will be your destruction! Pity is hidden from My eyes" (Hos. 13:14).GOP 134.1

In the Ugaritic myth, Baal receives a threat from Mot (death),

according to which he "will enter his insides, (will go down) his mouth like a roasted olive, (like) the produce of the earth and the fruit of (its) trees. Mighty Ba'lu [i.e., Baal] will fear him, Cloud-Rider will be frightened of him." <sup>71CS</sup>, <sup>1:266</sup>. A few lines later, as the story unravels, Baal lies utterly defeated by Mot: "Dead was Mighty Ba'lu [i.e., Baal], perished the Prince, master of the earth." <sup>72lbid., 267</sup>. GOP 134.2

Both biblical and Ugaritic texts associate the imagery of "devouring/swallowing" with death, which appears to indicate that the prophets were familiar with the idea of death/Mot as a swallower/devourer. We should note, however, a major contrast between the biblical text and its Ugaritic parallel. While in the Ugaritic myth Baal is defeated and "swallowed" by Mot (death), in the Bible the plot is reversed and God emerges as the One who will "swallow up" death forever. 73Jin-Hak Kim, "The City in Isaiah: A Theological Interpretation in Terms of Judgment and Salvation" (Th.D. diss.,University of Stellembosch, 2008), 11-112. This appears to indicate that the biblical prophet may have employed some elements of Ugaritic religion as a rhetorical device to draw a sharp contrast between the true God and Baal. GOP 134.3

# **Eschatological Banquet**

Another theme that deserves some consideration is the eschatological banquet described in Isaiah. After establishing His rulership on Zion, "in this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all people a feast of choice pieces, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of well-refined wines on the lees" (Isa. 25:6). A meal set on a mountain, along with a reference to elders (Isa 24:23), appears reminiscent of the covenant meal between God and the 70 elders of Israel on Mount Sinai (Ex. 24:9-11). Jeremiah 51:39 and Zephaniah 1:7-9 also portray the Lord hosting a banquet, albeit in a context of judgment against the wicked. GOP 134.4

At this point we should note that in the world of the ancient Near East, sharing a meal was a well-known religious metaphor, especially in the context of divine war. Typically, "when the battle has been won, the gods assemble and celebrate the victory with a great banquet." <sup>74</sup>Dennis E. Smith, "Messianic Banquet," David Noel Freedman, ed., The Anchor Bible Dictionary (New York: Doubleday,1992), 4:789. A couple of examples may be mentioned to illustrate the point. In the Enuma Elish, the Mesopotamian creation epic, a great banquet follows the triumph and succession to the kingship of Marduk; <sup>75</sup>CS, 1:401. and in the Ugaritic literature, El offers a banquet to honor Baal. <sup>76</sup>Mark S. Smith, The Ugaritic Baal Cycle (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 595 (CAT 1.4 vi 53-59)... GOP 135 1

Despite similarities that may simply reflect general human situations in which people celebrate major achievements with meals, the prophets use the banquet theme within an obviously distinct framework. That is, although the major contours of the underlying narrative may be similar, the nature and the character of the deity depicted in the prophetic writings are utterly distinct from the feasting gods of the ancient Near East. *GOP 135.2* 

# **Hermeneutical and Theological Implications**

As noted above, this brief survey identified a variety of parallels between the prophetic literature of the Bible and some nonbiblical texts of the ancient Near East. Such parallels, which consist in the use of similar phrases, motifs, or themes, call for a reflection on their implications for the inspiration and authority of the Scriptures. An unbalanced understanding of the relationship between the prophets and their ancient Near Eastern milieu may regard the prophetic message as either a mere reflection of ancient Near Eastern culture or an insulated heavenly product disconnected from its historical context. To avoid either extreme, it is necessary to develop an interpretative framework to explain such similarities and parallels, and to take seriously the inspiration, authority, and unity of the Scriptures. The following three considerations deal with the parallels noted above and suggest an interpretative framework GOP 135.3

## **Common Experience**

It stands to reason that some parallels belong to a pool of expressions and imagery the prophets shared with the larger context of the ancient Near East. In those cases the prophets may have used such expressions as part of their normal vocabulary without any intention of referring to texts or ideas of the neighboring nations. An example of such cases is the usage of certain terms and phrases attested in both Hebrew and Ugaritic. The Texts From Ugarit and the Hebrew Bible, vol. 2, Analecta Orientalia, 50 (Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1975), 401-422. These stock expressions were by no means restricted to a single language, but were shared by the large group of Semitic languages. GOP 135.4

In some cases universal human experience may explain some similarities. Sharing a meal after victory, for example, would have obtained for any culture of the ancient Near East. Since the Israelites lived in that environment it would be natural for them to understand God's eschatological victory as followed by a celebratory banquet. And as God revealed Himself to His people

through the prophets, He allowed them to use language, metaphors, and cultural imagery of their day to convey universal truth. In some cases, however, the use of this motif may point to some rhetorical intention. *GOP 135.5* 

### **Rhetorical Purpose**

In other cases the prophet may have alluded to language and imagery of Assyrian royal propaganda in order to picture the devastating effects of the Assyrian invasion upon Judah. Since the contemporary audience must have known such diction, the rhetorical effect would contribute to making the message more emphatic. In other cases, the prophets may have alluded to such language with polemical intention, namely, in order to apply to the Lord what the foreign king claimed for himself. It is self-evident to the prophet that the might and glory that pagan kings claimed for themselves could only be true of the Lord. Therefore, Isaiah could use the language and imagery of Assyrian royal annals that speak about the glory of the Assyrian king to emphasize the glory of God. Since those kings portrayed themselves as lions and/or lion hunters, some prophets masterfully alluded to this imagery to frame their message. Hosea thus refers to the Lord as a lion coming against His people, which in context functions as an ironic reference to the Assyrian king who would act as an instrument of God's judgment against the people. Although the Assyrian king would think of himself as the lion coming upon the prey, the prophet used that same diction to portray the Lord as the ultimate lion. GOP 136.1

It is instructive to note how Nahum used the lion motif in his message against Assyria. The prophet seems to be familiar with the self-portrayal of the Assyrian king as lion and courageous hunter and turned the king's self-laudatory claims against the king himself. In such rhetorical usage of a foreign motif, the prophet communicated a striking theological truth. In effect, the claim to possess glory and power made by pagan kings could only be true of the Lord. Besides, as illustrated by Nahum, the "kings of Assyria claimed to be 'lions,' so God would punish them as 'lions'—but not in the way that the Assyrians pictured themselves. They would indeed be like lions—not on the prowl, but as prey in a lion hunt!" 78Gordon H. Johnston, "Nahum's Rhetorical Allusions to the Neo-Assyrian Lion

Motif," 307. This ironic reversal shows a striking display of "poetic justice." <sup>79lbid., 307.</sup> Even when the imagery is used to communicate God's judgment upon His own people, the intention of the imagery is to underscore God's sovereignty. In spite of outward appearances, it is God who is in control of the events, and eventually He would intervene to destroy evil and put an end to suffering and sin. *GOP 136.2* 

We note then that allusion or reference to nonbiblical documents or their underlying expressions and imagery does not endorse the theological claims of those selfsame documents, but rather turn their original claim on its head and communicates the truth in a more effective way. GOP 136.3

#### General Revelation

Some similarities may not be satisfactorily explained merely on the basis of common experience or rhetorical usage. In effect, some parallels may lie at the level of theological themes and concepts, such as covenant, temple, and kingship, which underlie significant segments of the prophetic literature (and the Bible). Theological concepts such as the controversy between good and evil, the war in heaven, also appear in some ancient Near Eastern texts. <sup>80See, e.g.,</sup> the study by Hugh Rowland Page, Jr., The Myth of Cosmic Rebellion: A Study of Its Reflexes in Ugaritic and Biblical Literature (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996). More specifically, as noted above, some texts express hope for an ideal king and world in ways that reverberate with messianic passages. A more striking parallel portrays the annihilation of the serpent and the demise of death in ways that recall the prophetic approach to these matters. *GOP 137.1* 

Before suggesting an explanation for such similarities, one should keep in mind the abyssal differences between the prophetic view of reality and the perception of the world reflected in the nonbiblical texts. First, we note that the prophetic literature conceives of the theological themes just mentioned as a unified whole integrated by an underlying meta narrative—the controversy between good and evil— which gives coherence and meaning to the whole. In contrast, the literature of the ancient Near East is fragmentary, and

the parallels mentioned above come from different cultures and locations. It is difficult to ascertain whether a single people (outside Israel), or a single body of literature (outside the Old Testament). would hold or contain at once all those themes as an integrated expression of religious belief. Second, the abvssal difference between the portrayal of God in the prophetic literature and the gods of the nonbiblical texts should not be minimized. For the biblical prophets. God was Creator and Redeemer, perfect, loving. and righteous. On the other hand, the deities portrayed in the extrabiblical literature were subject to the impersonal forces of the cosmos and are often depicted as capricious, emotionally unstable. unreliable, and oftentimes at odds with one another. 81See Oswalt, 58, <sup>59.</sup> Thus, in spite of surface similarities in themes and motifs, the perception of God as reflected in both literatures, which lies at a much deeper level, conditioned the way in which these themes were understood in each culture or people. GOP 137.2

Having said this, we should consider the similarities and suggest an explanation for them. To begin, the possibility that extrabiblical texts drew from the biblical writings must be ruled out a priori because the latter mostly preceded the former. On the other hand, to say that the biblical authors—or the prophets, for that matter—simply borrowed their ideas from nonbiblical texts or traditions stands against a high view of Scripture and flies in the face of Scripture's own claim to be God's revelation. Thus we should advance two mutually complementary suggestions to explain the theological and thematic similarities mentioned above. *GOP 137.3* 

First, some of these parallels may have arisen under divine supervision. As one author puts it: "In his sovereignty over history and the development of human cultures, he [God] has allowed a variety of parallels to arise between theological concepts and practices in the ancient Near East and their counterparts in the Bible." 82Niehaus, Kindle, loc. 24 of 2488. Thus, we may reasonably suggest that God directed human history in ways that certain truths would never be lost. Moreover, God may have guided certain institutions as they appeared in human history so that they could later be turned into effective means of communicating God's saving purposes for the world. A case in point would be the covenant. Widely used in the ancient world to formalize a contract, alliance, or

compromise among kings, peoples, and other individuals, the covenant became a suitable model to express the relationship between God and His people. In fact, long before the scholars brought to light the documents that attested the covenant as a formal institution in the ancient Near East. Ellen White made this telling comment in regard to God's covenant with Abraham: "The Lord condescended to enter into a covenant with His servant. employing such forms as were customary among men for the ratification of a solemn engagement." 83Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets (Oakland: Pacific Press®, 1890), 137. In addition to the covenant, something similar may be said of kingship. As a human institution, kingship had many flaws and more often than not it became an instrument of oppression and alienation. Thus some nonbiblical ancient texts express hope for the coming of an ideal king. However, in spite of its pitfalls, God used kingship as a metaphor or model to convey His own perfect and loving rulership over His people, even to announce through the prophets the coming of the ideal messianic king. Thus, it is reasonable to say that in spite of the devastating effects of sin on humans and their institutions God somehow allowed or directed the creation of some institutions to later typify significant aspects of the plan of salvation. GOP 137.4

Second, we should also consider the similarities mentioned in this study from a different, though complementary, perspective. Some parallels may be better explained by positing a common origin, especially certain thematic and structural correspondences such as ideas of a conflict between good and evil, the end of evil, and the resurrection. Certain core truths known to Adam and Eve and the patriarchs were passed on from generation to generation of God's people until they were eventually recorded in the Scriptures. Moreover, the Scriptures themselves claim that certain truths were known to the patriarchs. For example, Enoch preached about the second coming of Christ (Jude 14), and Abraham knew about the heavenly city (Heb. 11:10). In the same vein Ellen White states: "To Adam were revealed future important events, from his expulsion from Eden to the Flood, and onward to the first advent of Christ upon the earth; His love for Adam and his posterity would lead the Son of God to condescend to take human nature, and thus elevate. through His own humiliation, all who would believe on Him." 84Ellen G. White, The Story of Redemption (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald®, <sup>1947), 48.</sup> It seems clear that some core truths were known to the human race since the Garden of Eden. And even those who rejected God's sovereignty also preserved some glimpses of truth, though distorted by polytheism and idolatry. Therefore, some of the parallels noted above may be explained by the fact that the religion of Israel and that of the neighboring nations have a common origin, which goes back to the garden of Eden and the patriarchs. *GOP* 138.1

Thus, despite similarities and affinities with extrabiblical texts, the Bible, or the prophetic literature for that matter, remains unique in that it contains God's revelation not distorted by human traditions. A crucial hermeneutical implication of this assertion is that Scripture stands as the normative criterion to evaluate theological claims of the extrabiblical texts (see 2 *Tim. 3:16*). And as regards the interpretation of Scripture, as much as the study of nonbiblical texts may illuminate certain aspects of the Bible. It is the Bible itself that provides the ultimate framework and criteria for its own interpretation. 85Ángel Manuel Rodríguez, "Ancient Near Eastern Parallels to the Bible and the Question of Revelation and Inspiration," Journal of the Adventist Theological Society 12, no.1 (2001): 43-64. GOP 1.39 1

# **Summary and Conclusions**

As noted above, a comparative study of the prophetic literature and the nonbiblical texts of the ancient Near East shows a significant amount of parallel phrases, motifs, and theological concepts. Although not exhaustive, the observations made in regard to the texts surveyed above may apply to other parallels not dealt with in this study. So the following comments summarize and conclude this study: *GOP 139.2* 

- 1. Although it is not possible to establish a direct link of literary dependence, the parallels noted above belong to a variety of categories and occur in phrases, motifs, and theological themes. GOP 139.3
- 2. In some cases, historical circumstances, content, and diction of a prophetic text may suggest with some reasonable degree of probability that the biblical writer knew the extrabiblical text— or some version of it—and intentionally used it for rhetorical or polemical purposes. *GOP 139.4*
- 3. Such parallels suggest that the prophets were well informed about some texts and ideas of the surrounding nations, and used them to interact critically with religious ideas that were at odds with God's revelation. *GOP 139.5*
- 4. In the case of parallel themes such as the idea of resurrection, messianic hope, it was noted that some of these parallels may have arisen under divine supervision in order to serve as vehicles for God's subsequent revelation while others may go back to the revelation given to Adam and Eve, and the patriarchs. This implies that the prophetic writings preserve a true and accurate account of God's revelation while the extrabiblical sources preserve the memory of such revelation in distorted forms. GOP 139.6
- 5. Although nonbiblical texts may contribute to our understanding of certain aspects of the Bible, the latter has theological and hermeneutical priority over them and sets the norm to evaluate their claims. Besides, although information from extrabiblical sources may help us to understand the Bible, ultimately the Bible is its own interpreter. *GOP 139.7*

# Chapter 6 - "My Heart Is Fainting in Me" (Jeremiah 8:18): Emotions and Prophetic Writings in the Bible

Chantal J. Klingbeil and Gerald A. Klingbeil

Emotions are an integral part of human existence. They are part of complex coping mechanisms installed by a Creator God whose own emotions (and particularly the biblical assertion that He is love [1 John 4:8]) are reflected in humanity's creation in the *imago Dei*, the "image of God" (Gen. 1:27). 1Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations have been taken from the New King James Version. Joy, exuberance, anticipation, pleasure, delight, and happiness must have all been part of God's original makeup of humanity for they characterize our existence today. Unfortunately, anger, sadness, sorrow, fear, depression, dejection, misery, and fury became part of our emotional repertoire following the fall in Genesis 3. GOP 140.1

The study of emotions in the Bible is a subject that has only recently enjoyed increasing interest. A casual look at commentaries and general introductions to the various prophetic books illustrates this observation. While historical and cultural contexts, specific language features, and the key theological themes of a particular prophetic book are a mainstay of these works, there is seldom any reference to the emotions or emotional expressions of the book or author. In the words of Paul Kruger, "emotions were for a long time regarded as part of the irrational, uncontrollable, and subjective aspects of humankind that do not justify serious study." <sup>2Paul A.</sup> Kruger, "Depression in the Hebrew Bible: An Update," Journal of Near Eastern Studies 64 (2005): 187. GOP 140.2

In this study we focus upon the little-explored field of the emotions of biblical prophets using insights learned from crosscultural psychology and cognitive sciences. Following a brief introduction to the wholistic nature of humanity, we will suggest a working definition of emotions and will look briefly at how emotions function. This section also considers important insights gained from cognitive sciences and psychology as possible avenues to deciphering

Following emotions embedded in texts. these important methodological considerations we will quickly review the Seventhday Adventist understanding of prophetic inspiration, setting the stage for a concise history of research on emotions in biblical texts and (more specifically) in prophetic texts of the Bible. We will then consider three key areas involving emotional responses in prophetic ministry, including (1) the call; (2) the emotional involvement of the prophet in a divine vision; and (3) the reaction of the prophet to the vision. Finally, we will close by suggesting a number of tentative conclusions that may open vistas for further research. GOP 140.3

# The Wholistic Nature of Humanity

Biblical anthropology has been the subject of numerous studies. 3See, e.g., Hans Walter Wolff, Anthropology of the Old Testament (London: SCM, 1974); John W. Rogerson, Anthropology and the Old Testament, The Biblical Seminar (Sheffield: JSOT, 1984); Bernard Lang, ed., Anthropological Approaches to the Old Testament, Issues in Religion and Theology (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985); Antonio Carmona Rodríguez, "El Hombre En El Judaísmo," Estudios Bíblicos 57 (1999): 589-611; Robert A. di Vito, "Old Testament Anthropology and the Construction of Personal Identity," Catholic Biblical Quarterly 61 (2000): 217-238; Bernd Janowski. "Der Mensch Im Alten Israel. Grundfragen Alttestamentlicher Anthropologie," Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche 102 (2005): 143-175; Gerald A. Klingbeil, "Between 'I' and 'We': The Anthropology of the Hebrew Bible and Its Importance for a 21st-Century Ecclesiology." Bulletin for Biblical Research 19 (2009): 319-339; Annette Schellenberg, Der Mensch, das Bild Gottes? Zum Gedanken einer Sonderstellung des Menschen im Alten Testament und in den weiteren altorientalischen Quellen, Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments 101 (Zurich: TVZ, 2011). In this research we presuppose the biblical understanding of the wholistic nature of human beings, as reflected in both the Old Testament and the New Testament, <sup>4See</sup> Norman R. Gulley, Systematic Theology: Creation, Christ, Salvation (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 2012), 109-116.<sub>GOP</sub> 141.1

Opposed to dualism is biblical monism, the position according to which all expressions of the inner life depend on the whole of human nature, including the organic system. The components of a human being function as a unit. There is no separable soul or spirit capable of conscious existence apart from the body. <sup>5Aecio E. Cairus,</sup> "The Doctrine of Man," in Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology, ed. Raoul Dederen; Commentary Reference Series 12 (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald®, 2000), 212. GOP 141.2

As humans we were created in the image of God (*Gen. 1:26*, 27). 6In earlier research it was argued that the capacity to speak and express complex emotions in language was part and parcel of having been created in the image of God. Cf. Gerald A. Klingbeil, "'He Spoke and It Was': Human Language, Divine Creation, and the imago Dei," Horizons in Biblical Theology 36, no. 1 (2014): 42-59, esp. 45-49.. Since we are made in God's image, we

could assume that our emotions are in some way reflective of God's emotions, even though ours are subject to sin while His are not. We do not believe in the duality of human beings, separating a body from an independent soul. Instead, we argue for a wholistic view of a human being where emotions are an integral part of the overall existence. <sup>7Cairus, 205-232</sup>. From the outset it would be important to reiterate the obvious: prophets were and are people who brought all of their personhood into their prophetic office. However, before we look at the emotional involvement of the prophets in their ministry and writings, it is important to try to find a working definition of the word *emotion.GOP 141.3* 

## Toward a Definition of Emotions: How Emotions Work

Because emotions are so intrinsically interconnected with our general makeup as human beings, it is often difficult to define them adequately. To complicate matters further, emotions have to do with expression as well as experience. In other words, we experience emotions and then also express emotions. They are communicated in the form of facial and linguistic expressions— in verbal or physical expressions, and in written forms. *GOP 142.1* 

The field of cognitive sciences has experienced explosive growth with advances in computing power and technology. This budding field is engaged in detailed studies of the neurological and linguistic processes involved in the expression of human emotions. Cognitive scientists are currently extremely interested in developing software and computer hardware capable of reading and responding to emotions in written texts. GOP 142.2

For the purpose of this research we distinguish between two main schools of thought regarding the understanding of emotional expressions. <sup>8</sup>Clearly, the study of emotions is much more nuanced than a simple distinction between two major schools. One school, mostly associated with cultural psychology, holds that while there are certain basic human emotions, such as anger, fear, joy, disgust, and dejection, emotional expression is basically culture-specific. <sup>9</sup>Cf. Kruger, <sup>188</sup>. In other words, the expression of a particular emotion will look different in Asia, for instance, when compared to how someone in the cultural context of North America might manifest the same emotion. *GOP 142.3* 

The other school, linked to cognitive science, holds that emotional expressions are universal and belong to the "universal psychic unity in humankind." <sup>10Ibid.</sup> and the references included there. Each school presents field studies to support their theory. For instance, in one study focusing on the emotion of anger, researchers found a coherent conceptual organization underlying the expression, which shared a common cultural model of the psychological effects of anger and should not be considered arbitrary but are motived physiologically. <sup>11G.</sup> Lakoff and Z. Kövecses, "The Cognitive Model of Anger

Inherent in American English," in Cultural Models in Language and Thought, ed. D. Holland and N. Quinn, 6th ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 195-221. Cf. Paul A. Kruger, "A Cognitive Interpretation of the Emotion of Anger in the Hebrew Bible," Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages 26 (2000): 181-193, esp. 185. For example, although there may be variations in language used to express certain aspects, the conceptual organization expressing anger was found to be very similar in both American English and biblical Hebrew. 12lbid. In this study we will side with Kruger in suggesting that the "answer probably lies somewhere in the middle." 13Kruger, "Depression in the Hebrew Bible: An Update," 188. Considering the extremely difficult task of defining an emotion, it may be more helpful to examine how emotions work *GOP 142.4* 

Scherer provides an excellent definition of emotion and how it operates. He says an emotion is "an episode of interrelated, synchronized changes in the states of all or most of the five organismic subsystems in response to the evaluation of an external or internal stimulus event as relevant to major concerns of the organism." 14Klaus R. Scherer, "What Are Emotions? And How Can They Be Measured?" Social Science Information 44, no. 4 (2005): 697. GOP 142.5

It should be noticed that emotions are normally triggered by stimulus events. In other words, something happens that triggers an emotion in a person. Sometimes another emotion is elicited or amplified by our evaluation of the event afterward. Elizabeth Phelps, a psychologist at New York University, reminds us of the close link between the mind and emotions. <sup>15Elizabeth Phelps, "Hold That Thought," Discover, July-August 2014, 31. Emotions are generated by thoughts and memories, and these then react upon the mind processes and strengthen or inhibit certain mental processes. It is even possible to generate an emotion by imagined representations. 16Scherer, "What Are Emotions? And How Can They Be Measured?" 700 GOP</sup>

Emotions serve in a certain sense as relevance detectors. We generally get emotional about people and things that we care about. It has been suggested that emotions are also the biggest influence on behavior and can interrupt a behavioral sequence and serve as

the trigger for setting new goals and plans. <sup>17</sup>Ibid., 701, 702. Cf. Klaus R. Scherer, "Physiological Models of Emotion," in The Neuropsychology of Emotion, ed. Joan C. Borod, Series in Affective Science (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 138. *GOP 143.* 2

Emotions impact communication and social interaction. The physical appearance, albeit often involuntary, of facial expressions will lead to a reaction in one's conversation partner. Subtle changes in nonverbal expressions may indicate dissonance from verbal expressions and communication. <sup>18See Paul A.</sup> Kruger, "The Face and Emotions in the Hebrew Bible," Old Testament Essays 18 (2005): 651-662, for facial expressions associated with certain emotions in the Old Testament. *GOP* 

Considering current language use, it is important to distinguish between a mood and an emotion. Generally speaking, emotions are thought of as high-intensity responses to stimulus events, whereas moods are "characterized by a relative enduring predominance of certain types of subjective feelings that affect the experience and behavior of a person." 19Scherer, "What Are Emotions? And How Can They Be Measured?" 705. It is normally difficult to identify a particular trigger for a mood. 20See Phelps, "Hold That Thought," 33, for an intriguing discussion of one particular trigger, i.e., phobias, and the role memory can play in the perpetuation or treatment of phobias. Often there are combinations of physiological and environmental factors that lead to a certain mood. GOP 143.4

Finally, an emotion is also more than a feeling. Emotions, while seemingly elusive and hard to define, do produce measurable differences in the central nervous system. <sup>21Scherer, "What Are Emotions?</sup> And How Can They Be Measured?" <sup>709.</sup> Considering the close relationship between mind and emotions, we will now turn our attention to the question of how emotions interact with the important concept of inspiration. *GOP 143.5* 

# **Emotions and the Question of Revelation and Inspiration**

A Seventh-day Adventist understanding of inspiration is based on the biblical evidence that God reveals Himself in a special way to certain individuals who, in turn, communicate His messages to others (1 Sam. 3:21-4:1; Isa. 22:14; Joel 3:1, 2 [ET 2:28, 29]; Matt. 11:27; Eph. 3:3, 4, 2 Peter 1:19-21). 22Note especially the important contribution of Fernando Canale, "Revelation and Inspiration," in Understanding Scripture: An Adventist Approach, ed. George W. Reid; Biblical Research Institute Studies 1 (Silver Spring, Md.: Biblical Research Institute/General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2005), 47-74, as well as the chapter in this volume by Ángel Manuel Rodríguez. Canale has reminded Adventists that the theological models of verbal inspiration or thought inspiration carry inherent methodological shortcomings and thus should be replaced with a "biblical model of inspiration." The process of "divine self-disclosure encompasses a wide variety of revelatory experiences, such as visions and dreams, verbal communication, and panoramic views presenting 'past, present, and future, " 23Frank M. Hasel, "Revelation and Inspiration," in The Ellen G. White Encyclopedia, ed. Denis Fortin and Jerry Moon (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald®, 2013), 1088. Similarly, Peter van Bemmelen notes that biblical evidence "points to specific individuals, chosen by God, as the primary locus of the working of the Holy Spirit." 24Peter van Bemmelen, "Revelation and Inspiration," in Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology, ed. Raoul Dederen, Commentary Reference Series 12 (Hagerstown. Md.: Review and Herald®, 2000), 39. Since we believe that the biblical authors were inspired (2 Peter 1:20, 21; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17), the primary focus of the process of revelation and inspiration is the prophet. GOP 144.1

Inspiration acts not on the man's words or his expressions but on the man himself, who, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, is imbued with thoughts. But the words receive the impress of the individual mind. . . . The divine mind and will is combined with the human mind and will. <sup>25Ellen</sup> G. White, Selected Messages (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald®, 1958), 1:21. *GOP 144.2* 

Ellen White herself claimed that the prophet, "under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, presents what is most forcibly impressed upon his own mind." <sup>26lbid., 1:26.</sup> Because of the close link between the mind

and emotions, the emotions of a prophet play an important role in the inspirational process. Prophets are not passive mediums for the prophetic voice. They are emotionally involved in their calling and experience the full gamut of human emotions. In the following section we will first offer a concise review of literature dealing with the recognition and understanding of emotions in biblical texts, followed by a closer look at the biblical data related to three crucial moments of prophetic ministry, i.e., (1) in response to the divine call; (2) concerning the emotional involvement of a prophet in the divine message; and (3) regarding the human reaction to the divine message. GOP 144.3

# **Prophetic Emotional Responses**

We've already noted the fact that the study of emotions in biblical texts is a relatively new area of interest in Hebrew Bible studies. In the following section we will briefly provide a succinct review of current scholarship and development in this growing field of interest 27Because of space limitations and the overall design of this study, we will not endeavor to provide a comprehensive critique of the philosophical foundations undergirding the various approaches. Inclusion in this review does not denote endorsement. Gary Anderson's A Time to Mourn, A Time to Dance (1991) represents a landmark publication, even though the study focuses predominantly upon the expression of joy and grief in Israelite religion or worship. <sup>28</sup>Gary A. Anderson, A Time to Mourn, A Time to Dance. The Expression of Grief and Joy in Israelite Religion (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991). The classical publication relating emotions to body imagery was originally published by E. Dhorme in 1923. Cf. E. Dhorme, L'emploi Métaphorique des Noms de Parties du Corps en Hébreu et en Akkadien (Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1963 [reprint]). Our focus upon prophetic emotional responses in the Hebrew Bible is much more specific. Later research focused upon comparative data from the ancient Near East, as can be seen in Fox's study on clapping as an expression of anger and anguish in Mesopotamia and Israel, 29Nils S. Fox, "Clapping Hands as a Gesture of Anguish and Anger in Mesopotamia and in Israel," Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society 23 (1995): 49-60. In 1998 Mark Smith published a study on the heart and innards in Israelite emotional expressions, using anthropological and psychological research. 30Mark S. Smith, "The Heart and Innards in Israelite Emotional Expressions: Notes From Anthropology and Psychology," Journal of Biblical Literature 117 (1998): 427-436. Smith's research focuses more on semantics and metaphors than on the emotions within a text per se. However, his conclusion makes an important point. "Emotions are not part of an interior world of feeling separate from external communication to others. Instead, emotions play a larger role in communicating to others and preparing the self for action." 31lbid., 436.<sub>GOP</sub> 145.1

By far the most focused contributions to the discussion of emotions in the Old Testament have been made by Paul Kruger from

Stellenbosch University in South Africa. Beginning in 2000 Kruger published a significant number of peer-reviewed studies dealing with anger, depression, and fear in the Old Testament. 32Kruger served as Doktorvater for Gerald's dissertation in 1995. His publication, organized in a time sequence, includes Kruger, "A Cognitive Interpretation of the Emotion of Anger in the Hebrew Bible," 181-193; idem, "The Obscure Combination ש אַה מ בד כ in Isaiah 30:27: Another Description for Anger?" Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages 26 (2000): 155-162; idem, "A Cognitive Interpretation of the Emotion of Fear in the Hebrew Bible," Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages 21 (2001): 77-89; idem, "Ahab's 'Slowly' Walking About: Another Look at 1 Kings 21:27," Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages 29 (2003): 133-142; idem, "On Emotions and the Expression of Emotions in the Old Testament: A Few Introductory Remarks," Biblische Zeitschrift 48 (2004): 213-228; idem, "Depression in the Hebrew Bible: An Update," 187-192; idem, "The Face and Emotions in the Hebrew Bible," 651-662. His particular interest in cognitive linguistics has shaped his approach and reminds readers and researchers alike that texts are a reflection of cultural and cognitive realities. Some of his students have also contributed research focusing upon cognitive linguistics and emotions, as can be seen in the work of Kotze<sup>33Zacharias</sup> Kotzé, "A Cognitive Linguistic Approach to the Emotion of Anger in the Old Testament," Hervormde Teologiese Studies 60, no. 3 (2004): 843-863. and Basson, 34Alec Basson, "A Few Metaphorical Source Domains for Emotions in the Old Testament," Scriptura 100 (2009): 121-128. Kotze correctly laments the relative lack of material that studies the emotion of anger in the Old Testament beyond the theologically significant discussion of divine anger. 35His helpful research history highlights the significant numbers of studies discussing divine anger, but the relative lack of studies seeking to decipher human emotions contained in the biblical text itself, followed by review of relevant anthropological research. Cf. Kotzé, "A Cognitive Linguistic Approach," 844-856. More recently Thomas Kazen incorporated insights from biology, neuroscience, and developmental psychology considering physiological and neurological processes that represent emotions in biblical law within the larger context of culture and conventions. 36Thomas Kazen, Emotions in Biblical Law: A Cognitive Science Approach, Hebrew Bible Monographs 36 (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2011). As has been noted by Hundley, Kazen's lack of differentiating between origin and rhetoric, "between the emotions that helped to generate a law and the

emotions used to promote it," 37Michael B. Hundley, review of Emotions in Biblical Law: A Cognitive Linguistic Approach, by Thomas Kazen. Journal of Hebrew Scriptures 14 (2014), online: http://www.jhsonline.org/reviews/reviews\_new/review713.html. represents a significant flaw and requires further research. GOP 145.2

The past decade or so has also seen a number of studies and doctoral dissertations focusing more specifically on emotions in prophetic texts of the Old Testament. 38See, e.g., Daniel I. Block, "Text and Emotion: A Study in the 'Corruptions' of Ezekiel's Inaugural Vision (Ezekiel 1:4-28)," Catholic Biblical Quarterly 50, no. 3 (1988); 418-442; M. Daniel Carroll R., "A Passion for Justice and the Conflicted Self: Lessons From the Book of Micah," Journal of Psychology and Christianity 25, no. 2 (2006): 69-175; and Elie Assis, "Why Edom? On the Hostility Towards Jacob's Brother in Prophetic Sources," Vetus Testamentum 56, no. 1 (2006): 1-20. 39. Deena Grant, "Divine Anger in Biblical Literature" (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 2009 Many of these studies examine anger—divine and/or human. Deena Grant's New York University Ph.D. dissertation looks at divine anger in biblical literature and includes discussions of herem, the divine warrior, and war. <sup>39</sup>Deena Grant, "Divine Anger in Biblical Literature" (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 2009). Earlier Esther Grushkin's dissertation from the same university looked at the effect of emotions on the human body as depicted in the Old Testament and included a discussion of body parts and their relation to the physiology of emotion 40Esther Grushkin, "Emotions and Their Effect on the Human Body as Depicted in the Hebrew Bible" (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 2000). Grushkin covered the following emotions: sorrow, fear, anger, compassion, joy, and happiness. David Phinney's 2004 Yale dissertation focused more specifically on Ezekiel's prophetic persona, highlighting a number of strategies that are used in the prophetic books of the Hebrew Bible to communicate emotions. 41David Nathaniel Phinney, "The Prophetic Persona in the Book of Ezekiel: Autobiography and Portrayal" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 2004). GOP 146.1

Finally, the latest volume on the subject, by Angela Thomas, compares anatomical idioms and emotional expressions in the Masoretic Text of the Old Testament and its Greek translation in the Septuagint. 42Cf. Angela Thomas, Anatomical Idiom and Emotional

Expression: A Comparison of the Hebrew Bible and the Septuagint (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2014). Thomas' main interest is comparative linguistics, considering the translation of idiomatic (or emotive) language into a target language whose syntax and grammar is vastly distinct from the original language. Having reviewed current publications involving emotions in biblical texts, we will now look at biblical emotional expression in general. *GOP 146.2* 

### **Expressions of Emotion in the Bible**

Although the Bible does not often directly address the thoughts and emotions of the prophets, a variety of techniques are used to portray prophets' emotions. As has been noted by Phinney, most prophetic books use a combination of third-person narrative and the prophet's own voice in their portrayals in order to indicate personal (and, at times, emotional) responses. <sup>43Phinney, "The Prophetic Persona</sup> in the Book of Ezekiel: Autobiography and Portrayal," abstract. GOP 147 1

One of the most common ways of expressing emotions in the biblical text (and particularly the Old Testament) is to speak of emotions as bodily occurrences. 44Strong emotions can be measured physiologically. Elevated blood pressure, sweating, increased heartbeat, and muscle spasms, among other physical phenomena, can indicate bodily emotive responses. Even in English emotions are often talked of as "bodily" experiences. For example, we may say that on hearing bad news "we went weak in the knees," or that a person's statement made "our blood boil." Kruger has included a helpful list of 19 physiological changes marking fear in the Hebrew Bible. 45Kruger, "A Cognitive Interpretation of the Emotion of Fear in the Hebrew Bible," 79-87. They include physical agitation (involving "trembling" [Ex. 19:16; 15:15]; "quivering" [Hab. 3:16]; "shaking" [Hag. 2:7]; or "quaking" [Ex. 19:18]); an increased heart rate (Ps. 38:10, 11); blood leaving one's face (the Hebrew gibbesu parur in Nahum 2:10, 11 means literally "gathered paleness"); hair straightening (Job 4:14, 15); inability to move (Ex. 15:16); inability to breathe (Dan. 10:17); etc. Similarly, Kruger lists numerous metaphorical expressions involving anger, including the body as a container for anger (/sa. 30:27; Eze. 38:18); increasing anger that produces steam (2 Sam. 22:9; Job 4:9); anger as fire (Isa. 30:27; Jer. 4:4; etc.); or anger as an

opponent (Ps. 69:24-26) or a dangerous animal (Eze. 43:8). 46More examples can be found in Kruger, "A Cognitive Interpretation of the Émotion of Anger in the Hebrew Bible," 187-191. The positive emotion of joy often involves semantic domains of singing and proclaiming. Furthermore, iov can be seen in distinct body parts. Joy makes a cheerful face (Prov. 15:13) and lights up the eyes (verse 30). Joy is also marked by a mouth filled with laughter (Job 8:21: Ps. 126:2). 47The Psalms are an emotional hotbed, expressing the full range of human and divine emotions. The issue of the imprecatory psalms (e.g., Ps. 5; 17; 28; 35; 40; 55; 59; 70; 71; 79; 80; 94; 129; 137; 139; 140) and their relationship to biblical theology and ethics have engendered numerous monograph-length studies. See, for example, most recently John N. Day, "The Imprecatory Psalms and Christian Ethics." Bibliotheca Sacra 159 (2002): 166-186: Nancy L. DeClaissé-Walford. "The Theology of the Imprecatory Psalms," in Soundings in the Theology of Psalms: Perspectives and Methods in Contemporary Scholarship, ed. Rolf Jacobson (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2011), 77-92, 176-178; Brent A. Strawn, "Sanctified and Commercially Successful Curses: On Gangsta Rap and the Canonization of the Imprecatory Psalms." Theology Today 69, no. 4 (2013): 403-417. Space limitations will not allow an appropriate discussion of these challenging expressions of emotions of revenge directed toward enemies and adversaries. Considering the wholistic nature of biblical theology and inspiration, the evangelical argument that these emotions are consistent with an Old Testament covenant but inconsistent with the new covenant must be dismissed. The existence of a full range of human emotions in the Psalms is a good reminder of the fact that all emotions can be brought to God and can be expressed to Him. Furthermore, one of the key motifs of the imprecatory psalms involves divine justice. Their existence in the Psalter points toward God's judgment day, when true justice will prevail. In the face of ever-increasing injustice and human suffering, this is a good reminder of divine justice transcending all evil powers. This justice is rooted in God's character, His law, and His grace. GOP 147 2

Beyond these more general descriptions of emotion, we will now look at specific examples of how prophets reacted emotionally to a divine call, a divine message, and how the emotional involvement of the prophets affected their messages. GOP 148.1

### **Emotional Response to Prophetic Call**

When we consider prophetic call stories in Scripture, it is surprising

to note a generally negative response to God's call. Prophets normally felt unworthy, unprepared, or just plain afraid. *GOP 148.2* 

Isaiah uses the expression 'oy-li, "woe to me," an expression of extreme negative emotion when he sees God in vision. Intriguingly, the particle 'oy is commonly used in laments and expressions of mourning (1 Sam. 4:7, 8). Clearly, Isaiah anticipates his own funeral when he considers God's glorious appearance. <sup>48John D. W. Watts, Isaiah 1-33, Word Biblical Commentary 24 (Dallas: Word, 1998), 74However, after having his lips touched in vision with a live coal from the altar (Isa. 6:6), he seems to be animated, as he is the only prophet mentioned in Scripture to then volunteer for the job, saying, "Here am I. Send me!" (verse 8). GOP 148.3</sup>

Similarities can be seen in Jeremiah's call (Jer. 1:4-10). The Hebrew text contains a similar form elsewhere in the Old Testament to mark terror. 49The Hebrew particle 'ătāh in Jeremiah 1:6 is translated with "Ah" in the NKJV or "alas" in the NIV. The term appears in other contexts where it denotes trouble or desperation (cf. Josh. 7:7; Judg. 6:22; 11:35; 2 Kings 3:10; 6:5; etc.). Clearly Jeremiah does not feel up to the task and claims an inability to speak because of his inexperience and youth (verse 6). In a world in which age determines importance Jeremiah's claim is legitimate and understandable 50Concerning the importance of age and elders in Israelite (and ANE) society, see Hanoch Reviv, The Elders in Ancient Israel. A Study of a Biblical Institution (Jerusalem: Magnes Press of the Hebrew University, 1989). Jeremiah's reluctance echoes Solomon's concern (1 Kings 3:7), even though God's call to leadership is distinct from God's call to prophetic ministry God then touches his mouth (echoing conceptually Isaiah's call experience), and then the prophet participates in the vision of the almond tree and the boiling pot. However, unlike Isaiah, he still seems to be afraid—although more of delivering the message than of God as can be seen in God's series of commands and warnings in Jeremiah 1:17-19.GOP 148.4

Ezekiel's calling also comes loaded with extreme negative emotions. The prophet-to-be falls face down after seeing a vision of God (*Eze. 1:28*). God strengthens him for the remainder of the vision, gives him an unflattering job description, and warns him against rebellion (*Eze. 2:8*). The biblical text notes that Ezekiel left

his first vision "in bitterness and in the anger of my spirit" (Eze. 3:14. NIV) 51The Hebrew text reads here literally, "and I went in bitterness and in the heat [or wrath] of my spirit" (Eze. 3:14). Leslie C. Allen, Ezekiel 1-19, Word Biblical Commentary 28 (Dallas: Word, 1994), 43, notes that "the language used evokes preclassical prophetic experiences and characterizes Ezekiel with authoritative credentials as an old-world prophet of the statue of Elijah. . . . The supernatural phenomenon had an effect on his [Ezekiel's] mind as well as his body, an emotional excitement that gripped him as the subjective effect of Yahweh's strong hand upon him." There is no specific explanation as to the reason for this strong reaction. Perhaps, similar to Jeremiah or Isaiah, Ezekiel felt overwhelmed by the weight of the assignment. Cooper thinks that the prophet's reaction may have been due to the negative response of his audience—already foretold by God (Eze. 2:5-8: 3:6-11), 52Lamar Eugene Cooper, Ezekiel, New American Commentary 17 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 83. See also Daniel I. Block, "Text and Emotion: A Study in the 'Corruptions' in Ezekiel's Inaugural Vision (Ezekiel 1:4-28)," Catholic Biblical Quarterly 50 (1988): 439. The emotional effect of the vision was so great that Ezekiel sat for seven days overwhelmed and obviously too afraid to share the vision (Eze. 3:15), as demonstrated by God's warning to Ezekiel that he would be held responsible for the blood of those he did not warn (verses 16-21).GOP 148.5

Mention should also be made of Moses, who stands as a prototype of prophets (Deut. 18:15) in the Old Testament. Moses, too, experiences negative emotions on being called to take God's message to Pharaoh. After hearing God's voice at the burning bush Moses "hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God" (Ex. 3:6). Once he has received his call, Moses' fear seems to shift. Instead of fearing the God who calls, he fears the anticipated reception the divine message would have in Egypt. Moses then initiates a series of excuses, which God patiently answers in an effort to alleviate Moses' fear ("I will certainly be with you" [Ex. 3:12]; "I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall say" [Ex. 4:12]). Moses is emotionally on edge throughout the encounter as demonstrated by his flight when his staff became a snake—and a sign (verse 3). Finally Moses runs out of excuses, but is still too afraid to take the call. His last recorded words in this meeting with God are: "O Lord, please send someone else to do it" (verse 13) It would seem that since God was unsuccessful in getting Moses to surrender his fears, He makes him choose between two fears. *Exodus 4:14* tells us literally "the nose of YHWH became hot," which the NKJV translates as "The anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses." Some interpreters have underlined the concessive nature of God's anger that could be translated as "even though the Lord was angry with Moses . . ." <sup>53Cf. Douglas K. Stuart, Exodus, New American Commentary 2 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2006), 137. This seemed to be the emotional push that Moses needed to start his journey back to Egypt—and into full and trusting ministry for the Lord. *GOP 149.1*</sup>

#### **Emotional Involvement in Divine Vision**

Visions are not detached academic exercises for the prophet. The biblical prophets not only observed events and places and object lessons in vision, they were often active in the vision and became emotionally involved in the scenes portrayed. Both Ezekiel and John were told to eat books during vision (*Eze. 2:9-3:3*; *Rev. 10:9*). John was given a measuring rod and told to participate by measuring (*Rev. 11:1*). Furthermore, prophets often participated in visions by asking and being asked questions (e.g., *Amos 8:2*; *Zech. 1-6*; Habbakuk). *GOP 149.2* 

Prophets also felt a range of emotions during vision. When catching a glimpse of God's glory, they often experienced the sensation of fear and awe. After seeing someone "like the Son of Man" (Rev. 1:13) John falls at his feet "as though dead" (verse 17). Daniel's experience is similar (cf. Dan. 8 and 10), thus providing a link connecting Old Testament prophetic authority to New Testament prophecy and eschatology. <sup>54G.</sup> K. Beale, The Book of Revelation, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 213, highlights the fourfold pattern involving observing a vision, falling on one's face in fear, being strengthened by a heavenly being, and then receiving further revelation from that being. In his vision Daniel notices a ram and a goat and tries to make sense of what he is seeing when Gabriel approaches Daniel to explain the vision. Daniel reports that he was "terrified and fell prostrate" (Dan. 8:17). GOP 149.3

Fear, however, is not the only emotion experienced in vision. For

example, emotional participation in a vision is illustrated by John, who became so involved in the vision of the scroll with the seven seals that he "wept much" (*Rev. 5:4*) when no one was found worthy to open the scroll. Notice the extreme emotion accentuated by the intensification of the verbal action. *GOP 150.1* 

Not all of John's emotional involvement in vision is negative, as illustrated by his reaction to the woman who was drunk with the blood of the saints in Revelation 17. When John saw her, he "marveled with great amazement" (Rev. 17:6). The literal translation of the Greek text would be "I marveled a great marvel," an expression of great astonishment. 55See Robert G. Bratcher and Howard Hatton, A Handbook on the Revelation to John, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1993), 246. David E. Aune, Revelation 17-22, Word Biblical Commentary 52c (Dallas: Word, 1998), 938, interprets the term more as perplexity and puzzlement. Translators and commentators have struggled to understand this expression because this emotion can express a positive sense of awe. 56Beale, 860, 861, calls the reader's attention to the LXX text of Daniel 4:17 and 19, where the same Greek root is utilized. The Aramaic text of the HB expresses the idea of being "appalled in 4:16. Astonished perplexity may be a good rendering of the Greek terms in line with the use of the word elsewhere in the NT (Matt. 27:14; Mark 12:17; 15:5; etc.)." The same Greek word is used in Revelation 13:3 describing the astonishment or marvel of the whole world as it witnesses the miraculous recovery of the beast from its fatal wound. In Revelation 13 this astonishment transforms observers into followers. John's emotional expression in Revelation 17:6 must have been so obvious as to evoke a question by the accompanying angel in verse 7.GOP 150.2

Another example of emotional involvement in divine revelation is found in Zechariah 3. When shown the vision of Joshua the high priest, Zechariah becomes so enthused that he begins to actively participate in the vision. After witnessing the showdown between the angel of the Lord and Satan over Joshua, he watches as Joshua's filthy garments are replaced with clean ones. In a sign of total engagement Zechariah seems to forget himself and joins the process by ordering a new turban for Joshua (Zech. 3:5). Zechariah's wish transforms an observer into a participant. 57Thomas Edward McComiskey, "Zechariah," in The Minor Prophets: An

Exegetical and Expository Commentary, ed. Thomas Edward McComiskey (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 3:1073. As noted by Meyers and Meyers, "the use of the first person at this point in the vision is unexpected and for most commentators represents the impulsive intervention of the prophet into the text. The versions had great difficulty here, either omitting (LXX) or converting to the third person (Vulgate and Peshitta)." 58Carol L. Meyers and Eric M. Meyers, Haggai, Zechariah 1-8, Anchor Bible 25b (New York: Doubleday, 1987), 190. In light of the present research, Zechariah's intervention should be understood as a clear expression of the prophet's emotional involvement. *GOP 150.3* 

# **Emotional Response to a Divine Message and Its Proclamation**

After a message has been delivered, prophets often experience various emotions. At times they are frustrated, or even angry, when they see that God's message has been met with indifference or hostility (1 Kings 18:21; 22:28; 2 Kings 13:19).GOP 151.1

An interesting example is the story of Jonah. The whole book of Jonah seems to be a case study of a prophet who refuses to share in God's emotions. The first chapter gives little clue as to Jonah's emotional state—except for the intriguing repetition of the verbal form yarad, "he went down," in Jonah 1:3, 5, and 2:7, which seems to link a state to a location, and could be described as—what Kamp calls—"a vertical flight." <sup>49</sup>Albert Kamp, Inner Worlds: A Cognitive Linguistics Approach to the Book of Jonah, Biblical Interpretation Series 68 (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 169. Cf. also Joyce Baldwin, "Jonah," in The Minor Prophets: An Exegetical and Expository Commentary, ed. Thomas Edward McComiskey (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 2:553, who notes that "Jonah is on a downward path, spiritually as well as literally." We are left to conclude only that Jonah does not welcome his call, as evidenced by his running in the opposite direction of the place to which he was called. The whole first chapter is marked by a notable lack of reported emotion on Jonah's part. The fact that the sailors are "afraid" and "calling out" (Jonah 1:5), "exceedingly afraid" or "terrified" (verse 10), and "feared the Lord exceedingly" (verse 15) stands in dramatic contrast to Jonah, who seems to be emotionally aloof. Faced with the penetrating questions of the terrified sailors, he declares a passionately that he should be thrown into the raging seas. His lack of emotion borders on apathy and is contrasted by the sailors' desperate attempt to row to land (verse 13) in order to avoid sacrificing a fellow human being and thus culpability. Once the crew realizes that escape is impossible, their emotional prayer pleading for divine forgiveness and recognition of the circumstances (verse 16) is countered by Jonah's silence. Jonah does not seem to feel anything at this point as he faces sure death. GOP 151.2

We see emotions coming to the fore only during his prayer (Jonah 2) while in the belly of the fish, when he refers to his "distress" or "affliction" (verse 2). <sup>60The</sup> Hebrew zārâ, "distress, anxiety, need," appears repeatedly in the HB and indicates affliction or distress caused by others (Gen.

42:21); it belongs to the standard vocabulary of the psalms (e.g., Ps. 22:12; 78:49; 81:8; 91:15; etc.). Distress marks existential fears and anxieties. After his dramatic rescue he is willing to experience and convey certain emotions, namely, God's wrath (Jonah 3:4), but is not willing to sympathize with God. The fact that God has "compassion" on the city (verse 10) evokes a surprising emotional response in Jonah: he was "greatly displeased and became angry" (Jonah 4:1). Jonah then explained his actions in fleeing to Tarshish as a reaction to God's emotions of compassion and abounding love (verse 2). The reader usually expects that a prophet would be very happy when a message from God is accepted. But Jonah is reported to be "very happy" (verse 6) only when a shady vine grows. When it withers he expresses extreme emotion, becoming "angry enough to die" (verse 9). The book of Jonah ends with God indirectly inviting Jonah to share his "emotions" (or concern) for the people and even animals of Nineveh (verse 11). GOP 151.3

Sometimes prophets struggled to make sense of what they had seen in vision, becoming so anguished that they become physically ill. Following his vision of the 2,300 evenings and mornings (*Dan. 8:26*), Daniel lay ill for several days. He was "appalled" by the vision because it was for him at that time "beyond understanding" (verse 27).*GOP 152.1* 

Prophets experienced intense emotions during vision. Through their visions they were sensitized to certain sins, often retaining a particularly strong negative reaction toward sin—even long after the original vision. For example, the prophet Jeremiah had repeatedly been shown the dangers and consequences of idolatry. Jeremiah 44 contains a message for the remnant who had fled to Egypt against God's order. The divine message reiterated God's disgust with idolatry and its sure results (leading to desolation, exile, and calamity) 61The theme of idolatry being one of the key reasons for divine judgment and exile is very prevalent in Jeremiah. See, for example, the references in Jeremiah 2:8, 23; 9:13 [ET 9:14]; 19:5; 23:13; 32:29, 35; etc. Cf. John Arthur Thompson, The Book of Jeremiah, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 674. Jeremiah, sensitized to the sin of idolatary, afterward took the unusual step of protesting the women's domestic cult of burning incense and pouring out drink offerings to the gueen of heaven (Jer.

44:20-30). 62The section is not introduced by a divine "thus says the Lord" but rather by "Then Jeremiah spoke to all the people" (Jer. 44:20). The prophet reiterates the divine message because of his involvement with its divine originator. GOP 152.2

Often prophetic messages put the prophets into disfavor with popular opinion, and many of the prophets had to fear for their personal safety. Like many of the earlier prophets. Jeremiah was not popular because of his prophecies. In Jeremiah 11:18-23 God Himself revealed a plot against Jeremiah, possibly even propagated by Jeremiah's own family in his own town. 63The book of Jeremiah contains a number of important confessions, including 11:18-12:6; 15:10-21; 17:14-18; 18:18-23; 20:7-18, which are often shaped as laments. Cf. Robert C. Culley, "The Confessions of Jeremiah and Traditional Discourse," in 'A Wise and Discerning Mind.' Essays in Honor of Burke O. Long, ed. Saul M. Olyan and Robert C. Culley, Brown Judaic Studies 325 (Providence: Brown Judaic Studies, <sup>2000), 69-81.</sup> Disillusionment, frustration, and the all-pervasive why question were part of Jeremiah's response to this existential and emotional crisis. Interestingly, the brief poetic lament in Jeremiah 11:20 features "body language," including the kidneys (translated in NKJV as "mind") and heart. 64 Jack R. Lundbom, Jeremiah 1-20: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary, Anchor Bible 21A (New York: Doubleday, 1999), 637, 638, reminds us of the fact that references to "kidney," "heart," and "testing" echo Psalm language (cf. Ps. 7:10 [ET 7:9]; 17:3; 26:2; Prov. 17:3: 21:2). "Yahweh tests human thoughts and human feelings, where either can represent the total person." GOP 152.3

Elijah's story reflects the bandwidth of emotional responses—both his own as well as those of national leaders and the population at large. Following God's demonstration of sovereignty and power on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18), the emotional state of Elijah seems to move from a mountaintop experience of triumph and victory over Baal's prophets (and theology) to terror at Jezebel's threat (1 Kings 19:2, 3). After beating a hasty retreat, his terror becomes full-blown depression, ultimately leading the prophet to desire his own death. "And he prayed that he might die, and said, 'It is enough! Now, Lord, take my life, for I am no better than my fathers!' " (verse 4). God's patient dealing with the fragile emotive state of His messenger highlights God's understanding of emotional pain and

His commitment to see His servants through the valleys of the shadow of death GOP 152.4

Prophets included repeated predictions of disaster and punishment for sin. While these pronouncements were often met with indifference by the people, the prophet, as part of the group that would suffer the results of disobedience, was keenly aware and afraid of the impending disaster. Jeremiah describes the situation poignantly in Jeremiah 4:19: "O my soul, my soul! I am pained in my very heart! My heart makes a noise in me: I cannot hold my peace. because you have heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war" (NKJV). 65The literal translation of "oh my soul" would be, "oh my entrails (or belly)." The entrails were often considered as the seat of all emotions. Cf. Barclay M. Newman, Jr., and Philip C. Stine, A Handbook on Jeremiah, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 2003), 136. The entire verse contains highly visual body part language that is difficult to translate into English. As noted by Huey, "the pain he [Jeremiah] felt as he announced Jerusalem's destruction is revealed in his cry 'Oh. my anguish, my anguish!' In his mind Jeremiah could already hear the trumpet sound of the approaching enemy and the battle cry of soldiers massed for an assault on his beloved city. The thought of such a calamity made his heart beat wildly." 66F. B. Huey, Jeremiah, Lamentations, New American Commentary 16 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1993), 83.<sub>GOP</sub> 153.1

A similar verse that is extremely rich in body part language expressing emotion can be found in *Habakkuk 3:16*. Part of an important prayer that continues the dialogue between prophet and the Lord, Habbakuk is terrified at the prospect of God's punishment of Judah. His outpouring contains many of the metaphorical expressions depicting fear: "When I heard, my body trembled; my lips quivered at the voice; rottenness entered my bones; and I trembled in myself (Hab. 3:16). As noted by Palmer Robertson: *GOP 153.2* 

The expression of the prophet concerning the effect of the Lord's speech on him ought not to be taken merely as a dramatizing literary device. He describes instead an actual physical experience which he underwent as the full weight of the significance of his vision dawned on him. His solar plexus convulses. His feeble effort

to maintain a dialogue with the Almighty results in uncontrollable buzzing of the lips. His bones give the sensation of suddenly rotting away. His legs quake beneath him. <sup>670</sup>. Palmer Robertson, The Books of Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah, New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 242, 243. GOP 153.3

This makes Habakkuk's emotional faith statement all the more contrasting when he finally exclaims, "Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation" (verse 18). GOP 153.4

### Instead of a Conclusion

The brief review of the emotional involvement of biblical prophets in their prophetic ministry suggests that prophets were not simply a conduit for God's words. Emotions were a part of the vision experience and are part and parcel of the process of inspiration. *GOP 153.5* 

Recognizing insights from cognitive science research and psychology can help us understand different ways in which emotions contributed to the prophetic experience. *GOP 153.6* 

In view of the fact that emotions are normally triggered by stimulus events, experiencing God in vision triggered emotions in the biblical prophets during and after vision. These emotions would have been reinforced with each subsequent remembrance and retelling of the occurrence. This functioned as a mnemonic device and helped keep the vision vivid in the mind of the prophet as well as the audience. *GOP 154.1* 

Emotions serve as relevance detectors. Thus emotional expressions in prophetic books can serve to highlight certain themes or sections of a vision. Daniel's reaction to the 2,300 evening and morning prophecy serves to heighten the importance, build tension, and underline the later explanation of this prophecy (cf. *Dan.* 8:27). <sup>68</sup>Note also John's weeping in Revelation 5, which magnifies the importance of the eventual breaking of the seals and underlines the centrality and importance of the Lamb, who is the only one worthy to break the seals. *GOP* 154.2

In a highly emotional moment individuals will recall details they are not normally capable of remembering. For example, most people can remember where they were and what they were doing on hearing of the September 11 attacks on the Twin Towers in Manhattan. Emotion, in this case, served as a snapshot and helped the prophet focus, order, and remember details of a vision. This may be a possible explanation of the vivid, yet often varying prophetic descriptions of God, heaven, or heavenly beings. <sup>69For</sup> more, see Block, 418-442, and his discussion of the supposed inconsistencies and "corruptions" of Ezekiel's inaugural vision. Compare also Phelps, 30-33, for

The fact that emotions are the biggest influence on behavior and can interrupt a behavioral sequence, as well as serve as the trigger for setting new goals and plans, seems to be reinforced throughout the prophetic books. The goal of many of the prophetic messages was to bring a sense of the sinfulness and consequences of sinful behavior, and inspire the audience to set new goals and new plans. This represents in essence the biblical concept of repentance or "turning around." This goal is reflected most clearly in the choice of language in all prophetic writings, calculated to shock, startle, get attention, and elicit an emotion from the audience. <sup>70Choice</sup> of language is also closely associated with genre. For example, prophets often used laments (cf. Lamentations, Amos 5) or even a love song (Isa. 5), which would further trigger emotion. Some were even instructed to go further with acted object lessons (Eze. 4:1-12; Jer. 13:1-11; 27:1-22; 28:10; 44:8-13; etc.). GOP 154.4

The prophetic process underlines the fact that God has not only thoughts and plans, but feelings too. God's emotions stand in contrast to human emotions because they are dependable and continually proceeding from a God who "is love" (1 John 4:16). GOP 154.5

Emotions generated in vision repeatedly lead to questions for God and answers from Him. A prophet not only speaks for God but also often vicariously expresses the emotions of his audience. In a sense the prophet is called to incarnate the emotional responses of both the people and the Lord and use his or her emotions to better convey God's message. Part of the call of being a prophet is an invitation to view the world as God sees it and feel some of the emotions that God feels as He views human activity. Not only are God's words to be spoken by the prophet, but God's emotions are to be felt and conveyed. *GOP 154.6* 

# Chapter 7 - Ellen White's Insights Into Scripture in Light of the Original Biblical Languages

Richard M. Davidson

The approach I share in this essay concerning Ellen White's writings is one that I have not seen before in a sustained study on her published materials. Because of the nature of the material, this paper takes more the tone of a personal testimony than that of a formal presentation. None of the following personal illustrations may be found in the standard textbooks treating the prophetic ministry of Fllen White 1There are some excellent treatments of this topic. See especially Herbert E. Douglas, Messenger of the Lord: The Prophetic Ministry of Ellen G. White (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press®, 1998). My approach comes from the perspective of an Old Testament biblical theologian. That is my academic discipline. <sup>2l</sup> earned a Th.D. (later retitled Ph.D.) in biblical studies from Andrews University, with a major in Old Testament, a minor in New Testament, and a cognate area of systematic theology. My dissertation was an interdisciplinary hermeneutical study involving the New Testament use of the Old Testament (typological relationships). Since becoming a seminary professor at Andrews University in 1979, I have had numerous opportunities to consider Ellen White's insights when seeking to understand the meaning of biblical passages in the original Hebrew/Aramaic and Greek. GOP 155.1

Time and again I have been surprised to find that nuances of the biblical texts detected only in my study of the original languages, and not reflected in modern translations, were embedded in comments on those texts by Ellen White. Conversely, I have frequently come to the usually serendipitous discovery that Ellen White's detailed insights concerning biblical narratives, which I had assumed were not mentioned directly in the Scriptures, are actually supported by a close reading of the biblical text in the original languages. These experiences have repeatedly reminded me of statements that Ellen White made to the effect that since little heed is given to the Bible, her writings are a lesser light to lead us to the greater light (i.e., Scripture). 3"Little heed is given to the Bible, and the Lord has given a lesser light to lead men and women to the greater light" (Ellen G. White, "Dear Brethren and Sisters," Review and Herald, Jan. 20, 1903, 15; also in

idem, Selected Messages [Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald®, 1980], 3:30; idem, Colporteur Ministry [Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press®, 1953], 125). $_{GOP\ 155.2}$ 

Before sharing specific examples, I offer the following caveats: *GOP* 155.3

First, in this essay I do not intend to imply that if one simply studies Ellen White's writings, there is no further need to study Scripture. In fact, I support just the opposite. In what follows I have sought to show that the divine gift of prophetic inspiration is evident in the writings of Ellen White because (among other reasons) her deep insight into biblical passages seems beyond her human capability, given her own lack of facility with the original biblical languages. But these and other inspired insights into the biblical text should motivate us to go back to Scripture, to search deeply to see if her insights are in fact supported by biblical exegesis, and then to share the distinctive truths of the Advent movement, especially with others not of our faith, from Scripture alone, not from her writings. GOP 155.4

Second, Ellen White has certainly not exhausted the meaning of these and other Scriptures. Her sampling of buried treasures to be found in the Bible should prompt us to mine the Scriptures for ourselves, utilizing all available exegetical tools to find additional riches contained therein. GOP 156.1

Third, Ellen White often uses biblical phraseology in her writings where it is clear from the context that she is not seeking to give specific exegetical insights regarding a given biblical passage. We may compare this with the common English expression that "I have escaped by the skin of my teeth": those of us who use this biblical allusion in ordinary conversation are clearly not trying to exegete Job 19:20, the original source of this citation. GOP 156.2

Fourth, I am not suggesting in this essay that it is necessary to know Greek and Hebrew in order to have a solid understanding of the Bible or the writings of Ellen White. The main message of Scripture is plain in whatever modern-language versions one may read. But the knowledge of the original languages is helpful for specialists in biblical studies, as scholars attempt to plumb the depths of meaning in a given biblical passage in all its beauty and richness. *GOP 156.3* 

Fifth, I am not arguing for a theory of verbal inspiration, either for the Bible writers or for Ellen White. Both the Bible and Ellen White make clear that God inspired His prophets with thoughts, and did not verbally dictate the message to them. At the same time, both the Bible writers and Ellen White express as much dependence upon the Holy Spirit in communicating the inspired message as in receiving it, sometimes involving divine guidance in selecting appropriate words to express the truth. The Holy Spirit imbued human instruments with divine truth in thoughts and so assisted them in writing that they faithfully committed to apt words the things divinely revealed to them. 41 Cor. 2:10-13; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17; 2 Peter 1:19-21. Ellen White writes: "I am just as dependent upon the Spirit of the Lord in relating or writing a vision, as in having the vision. It is impossible for me to call up things which have been shown me unless the Lord brings them before me at the time that He is pleased to have me relate or write them" (Spiritual Gifts [Battle Creek, Mich.: James White, 1860], 2:292, 293; republished in idem, Selected Messages [Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald®, 1958], 1:36). "Although I am as dependent upon the Spirit of the Lord in writing my views as I am in receiving them, yet the words I employ in describing what I have seen are my own, unless they be those spoken to me by an angel, which I always enclose in marks of quotation" (idem, in "Questions and Answers," Review and Herald, Oct. 8, 1867, 260; republished in idem. Selected Messages, 1:371), "The Spirit of God works upon my mind and gives me appropriate words with which to express truth" (idem, letter 325, 1905; published in idem, Selected Messages, 3:51). GOP 156.4

Finally, I do not claim that I have solved all the difficulties related to Ellen White's allusions to biblical texts, or in areas in which Ellen White presents insights into Scripture that I have not been able to verify by detailed biblical exegesis. In some cases Ellen White may have seen in vision details of biblical history that are not set forth in the biblical record. In other cases, apparent discrepancies have been pointed out by certain modern researchers between some of Ellen White's descriptions of historical events and the biblical record of those events. I once had a long list of these apparent discrepancies, but the list has been steadily shrinking before the

light of further study. I have a "shelf in my mind where unsolved problems like these are resting until further light shines upon them. For some problems I no doubt will have to wait until Christ Himself explains them to me in the hereafter! GOP 156.5

But dozens—yes, scores—of times I have encountered truth from the "lesser light" and then later come to realize that it is part of the "greater light" already, if studied deeply. Many other times I have found some rich treasure in the Scriptures revealed only in the original language, and then later discovered that Ellen White had captured this insight as well, apparently without any knowledge of the original languages (or of secondary sources pointing out this insight). In these occasions my heart has burned with joy (like the disciples on the way to Emmaus, *Luke 24:32*), as Scripture has been illuminated and Ellen White's prophetic gift confirmed. In what follows I will share a few of these personal "burning heart" experiences, particularly in relation to the Old Testament. *GOP* 157 1

# Genesis 1:26, 27: Imago Dei

At the very beginning of the Bible one encounters the description of Adam and Eve being made in the image of God (Gen. 1:26, 27). In Ellen White's commentary on this Creation account, she writes that "man was to bear God's image, both in outward resemblance and in character " 5Ellen G. White, The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan, as Illustrated in the Lives of Patriarchs and Prophets (Oakland, Calif.: Pacific Press®, 1890), 45. There has been much discussion regarding the imago Dei, or "image of God." 6See Richard M. Davidson, "Biblical Anthropology in the Old Testament" (plenary session paper presented at the Third International Bible Conference, Jerusalem, Israel, June 16, 2012), 2-14: to be published under the title "The Nature of the Human Being From the Beginning: Genesis 1-11" (forthcoming from the BRICOM in the volume on Biblical Anthropology, ed. Clinton Wahlen). Genesis 1:27 states the divine deliberation: "Let us make man in Our image, after Our likeness."7Biblical citations are from the New King James Version, unless otherwise noted. In my examination of the Hebrew text of Genesis 1.27 8Davidson, "Biblical Anthropology," 9-10. I have found that the two words translated "image" (tselem) and "likeness" (demut), while overlapping in semantic range, tend to emphasize different aspects. A study of the use of these two terms in Scripture reveals that tselem, "image," emphasizes the external, concrete form. 9See Bruce K. Waltke, An Old Testament Theology: An Exegetical Canonical, and Thematic Approach (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 215: "Aside from its two possibly figurative usages, tselem always refers to a physical image, having a formed body," Waltke (ibid.) suggests that the two figurative uses (Ps. 39:6: 73:20) may well come from another root, II tselem, meaning "silhouette, fleeting shadow." John Goldingay draws the implication for the image of God: "An image is the visible representation of something, which suggests God's image lies in humanity's bodily nature. . . . The First Testament . . . systematically presupposes a correspondence between God and humanity in its bodily as well as its inner nature" (Old Testament Theology, Vol. 1: Israel's Gospel (Downers Grove, III.: InterVarsity, 2003), 102, 103. whereas demut, "likeness," emphasizes the inward, abstract character qualities, <sup>10See, e.g., Ilona N.</sup> Rashkow, Taboo or Not Taboo: Sexuality and Family in the Hebrew Bible (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000), 61, who summarizes regarding the term demut: "[demut] is generally used to signify the 'appearance,' 'similarity,' or 'analogy' of nonphysical

traits ... " and when juxtaposed, as in Genesis 1:27, the two terms denote both external form and inward characteristics. 11Rashkow (ibid., 61) summarizes: "God says that his intention is to make Adam both in 'in our image' (that is, physically similar, whatever that may mean), and in 'in our likeness' (having the same abstract characteristics)." Ellen White had no training in biblical Hebrew, and yet she was on the mark when she wrote that the image of God consisted of both "outward resemblance and character." This reading of Ellen White is remarkable because in the nineteenth century biblical scholars were virtually unanimous in viewing God along the lines of Greek dualism as "timeless"—beyond space and time—and thus not having an outward form, and therefore any interpretation of the imago Dei that included "outward resemblance" was rejected out of hand. 12David Carr summarizes this common notion that is still generally held today by biblical scholars: "Genesis 1 must be talking about something else—anything else—than actual physical resemblance between God and humans" (The Erotic Word: Sexuality, Spirituality, and the Bible [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003], 18). Carr (ibid., 17-26) counters this notion with solid biblical data from throughout Scripture. See my discussion of this in Davidson, "Old Testament Anthropology," 4, 5.GOP 157 2

# Genesis 2:25: Garments of Light and Glory

Ellen White describes Adam and Eve when they were created as clothed in "garments of light and glory." 13White, Patriarchs and Prophets, 45. Is this insight only in Ellen White's writings, or is it already implicit in Scripture? In Genesis 2:25 Moses depicts Adam and Eve at creation as "naked." The word for "naked" in this verse is 'arom, which elsewhere in Scripture frequently refers to someone not fully clothed or not clothed in the normal manner. <sup>14For instance</sup>, in 1 Samuel 19:24 the term is "used of one, having taken off his mantle, goes only clad in his tunic" (Wilhelm Gesenius, Gesenius' Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures, trans, Samuel P. Tregelles, 1857 ed. [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949], 653). Again, in Isaiah 20:2, the reference is to one "dressed with 🚍ag only" (KBL, 735; cf. John 21:7). Other passages employ the term in the sense of "ragged, badly clad" (Job 22:6; 24:7, 10; Isa. 58:7; Gesenius, 653). The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament (HALOT) (Leiden: Brill, 1994-2001), 883, identifies numerous Old Testament passages where 'arom denotes "lightly dressed" (Isa. 20:2. 4: 58:7: Mic. 1:8: Job 22:6; 24:6, 7, 10) and one passage where the term refers to a man without armor (Amos 2:16). Genesis 2:25 does not explicitly indicate in what way Adam and Eve were without clothes in the normal sense ("normal" from the post-Fall perspective). GOP 158.1

But such further detail may be deduced from another major Creation account in the Bible: Psalm 104. This psalm moves through the seven days of Creation in the exact same order as in Genesis 1, except that it fills in many details not mentioned in Genesis 1 15Richard M. Davidson, "Creation in the Psalms: Psalm 104," in He Spoke and It Was: Divine Creation in the Old Testament, ed. Gerald A. Klingbeil (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press®, 2015), 85-105. Cf. Jacques Doukhan's published dissertation The Literary Structure of the Genesis Creation Story, Andrews University Seminary Doctoral Dissertation Series, vol. 5 (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 1978), 81-88, which shows how Psalm 104 follows exactly the same order as the Genesis creation account, and which analyzes the point-by-point parallels between the two passages. Psalm 104 provides a poetic description of God's creative work, and also gives at least one indication of His appearance, or rather, His "clothing." Note verses 1 and 2, which parallel the creation of light in Genesis 1: "Bless the Lord, O my soul; O Lord, my God, You are very great;

You are clothed in glory and majesty, wrapped in a robe of light." If God is portrayed as clothed with light and glory at Creation, we may reasonably deduce that the first human beings, who were created in the image and likeness of God both in outward resemblance and in character (as discussed above), are similarly clothed. They were not clothed in the "normal manner" from a post-Fall perspective, but were rather clothed like the One in whose image/likeness they were made. Ellen White's description of the clothing of Adam and Eve before the Fall thus may be logically deduced from the biblical data alone, when one examines the Hebrew terminology for nakedness and the intertextual connection between the Genesis creation narrative and Psalm 104. GOP 158.2

### Genesis 3:7: Nakedness of Soul

What is not often realized is that Genesis 2 and 3 utilize two different Hebrew words for "naked." 16Attention in the commentaries usually focuses upon the similarity of sound and spelling between 'arummim "naked" in Genesis 2:25 (referring to Adam and Eve) and 'arum "subtle" in the next verse, Genesis 3:1 (referring to the snake). It is usually suggested that the word for "naked" in 2:25 is used for the sake of a literary play on words. A paronomasia may indeed be involved, but this is not all that is involved! Elaine Phillips notices that in contrast to the word for "naked" in Genesis 2:25. "the word is now [Gen. 3:6] slightly different in form" and suggests that "the knowledge they acquired seems somehow to have affected their perception of their nakedness" (Elaine A. Phillips, "Serpent Intertexts: Tantalizing Twists in the Tales," Bulletin for Biblical Research 10 [2000]: 237). But she does not get to the heart of the matter! The change to a different word for "naked" in Genesis 3 has more specific theological significance, as I argue below. As we have seen above, the word for "naked" in Genesis 2:25 means "not clothed in the normal manner." and implies (in light of the *imago Dei* and *Psalm 104:1, 2*) that they were clothed with light and glory like God. By contrast, in Genesis 3:7, 10, and 11 the Hebrew word for "naked" is 'erom, which elsewhere in Scripture always appears in a context of total (and usually shameful) exposure, describing someone "utterly naked" or "bare." 17See Eze. 16:7, 22, 39; 18:7, 16; 23:29; Deut. 28:48. Cf. Gesenius, 625; The New Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon (hereafter BDB; Christian Copyrights, 1983), 735, 736. As a result of sin, the human pair finds themselves "utterly naked," bereft of the garments of light and glory, seeking to clothe themselves with fig leaves. GOP 159 1

The nakedness of Adam and Eve described in Genesis is clearly more than physical nudity, for Adam depicts himself as still naked when God comes walking in the cool of the day, even though he was already covered with fig leaves (*Gen. 3:10*). The nakedness of Genesis 3 involved not only the loss of the robes of light and glory, but included a sense of "being unmasked," <sup>18Claus Westermann, Creation</sup> (London: SPCK, 1974), 95. a consciousness of guilt, a nakedness of soul. And this is exactly how Ellen White describes the guilty pair's nakedness: *GOP 159.2* 

After his transgression Adam at first imagined himself entering upon a higher state of existence. But soon the thought of his sin filled him with terror. The air, which had hitherto been of a mild and uniform temperature, seemed to chill the guilty pair. The love and peace which had been theirs was gone, and in its place they felt a sense of sin, a dread of the future, a *nakedness of soul*. The robe of light which had enshrouded them now disappeared, and to supply its place they endeavored to fashion for themselves a covering; for they could not, while unclothed, meet the eye of God and holy angels. <sup>19White, Patriarchs and Prophets, 57. (Italics supplied *GOP 159.3*)</sup>

Once again, Ellen White's insights are in harmony with the biblical data, when viewed in light of the original Hebrew. <sup>20</sup>For further discussion, see Richard M. Davidson, Flame of Yahweh: Sexuality in the Old Testament (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2007), 55-58; and Gary A. Anderson, "The Punishment of Adam and Eve in the Life of Adam and Eve," in Literature on Adam and Eve: Collected Essays, ed. Gary Anderson et al. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2000), 57-81. GOP 160.1

# Genesis 4:1: The Expectation of Adam and Eve That Cain Would Be the Messiah

Another example of the correlation between Scripture in the original language and Ellen White's insights is found in her comments on the thinking of Adam and Eve when their first child. Cain, was born. White writes: "The Savior's coming was foretold in Eden. When Adam and Eve first heard the promise, they looked for its speedy fulfillment. They joyfully welcomed their firstborn son, hoping that he might be the Deliverer. But the fulfillment of the promise tarried." 21Ellen G. White, The Desire of Ages (Oakland, Calif.: Pacific Press®, 1898), 31 Can this thinking of Adam and Eve be substantiated from Scripture? Some years ago I was reading Genesis 4 in my Hebrew Bible and serendipitously came across something I had never noticed before in verse 1: "Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, and said, 'I have acquired a man [child]' "- and then most English versions translate— "with the help of the Lord." But as is apparent in modern versions of the Bible that place the supplied words in italics (e.g., KJV, NKJV, NASB), the phrase "the help of is not present in the Hebrew original. GOP 160.2

In the Hebrew of this verse, immediately after the word "man [child, Heb.' ish]" comes the particle 'et, which can either represent the preposition "with" or be an indicator that the next word is a direct object in the sentence. Translating simply as a preposition, "with the Lord," does not really make any sense in the immediate context. 22Unless one adopts a recent critical reading of the text which argues that "scriptural texts share an Aristotelian view of how conception occurs but adapt it distinctively so that there are three parties involved—God, the male with his seed, and the female with the blood or fluids of her womb-and all three parties are understood to be actively involved in the production of a human fetus." Since "the life force that generates and develops the fetus in the mother's womb is divine," eventually in biblical accounts "any mention of male seed disappears" and leads to the possibility of a "virgin" birth of Jesus where the human male seed is totally supplanted by reference to the Holy Spirit, in parallel to the genre of Greco-Roman biography where great figures are conceived by "a union between one of the gods and a human mother, with no human male involved in the process" (Andrew Lincoln, "How Babies Were Made in Jesus'Time," Biblical Archaeology Review 40, no. 6 [2014]: 46, 47). Such reading ultimately goes against the grain of the biblical text in seeking to explain the virgin birth of Christ in humanistic

terms, and does not fit into the biblical worldview. One must add "the help of" as many modern translations do, but an examination of other passages in Scripture using this particle as the preposition "with" reveals no clear examples where it can mean "with the help of." Thus the addition of "the help of seems unlikely as the best translation. GOP 160.3

The alternative that remains is to take the particle 'et as the sign of the direct object, which in English can be represented by a one-em dash. So the translation of this verse would be: "I have gotten a Man Child—the Lord!" This translation makes good sense, and the grammatical construction is paralleled elsewhere in Scripture. <sup>23For</sup> this same grammatical construction with a second direct object, see, e.g., Gen. <sup>26:34.</sup> Thus I conclude that translating 'et as a direct object is the best choice in this verse. This is the translation represented, for example, in the New American Standard Bible in the margin. Evangelical scholars such as Walter Kaiser have carefully analyzed this passage and have come to the same conclusion. <sup>24Walter C</sup>. Kaiser, Jr., Toward an Old Testament Theology (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, <sup>1978), 37.</sup> This text implies that when Adam and Eve were naming Cain, they were thinking He might be the promised messianic Seed, Yahweh Himself. They hoped that the Messiah had come, only to find out that Cain was not the Messiah but a murderer. GOP 161.1

Ellen White under inspiration wrote what was consistent with the biblical data, as revealed in the Hebrew original. *GOP 161.2* 

### Genesis 4:7: Insights Into the Cain-Abel Narrative

Let us look at one more example in Genesis where Ellen White's insights correlate with the best (but often overlooked) understanding of the Hebrew original of a biblical passage. In Genesis 4 we find the familiar narrative of Cain and Abel. After Cain and Abel brought their respective offerings to the Lord, and the fruit of Cain was rejected while the animal sacrifice of Abel was accepted, Cain's "face fell" (verse 5). The Lord came to him, and said (verse 7, usually translated thus): "If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire [Heb. teshugah] is for you, but you must master [Heb. mashall it" (NASB). According to this usual way of translation, the picture is a negative, sinister one, in which sin is compared with a demon or wild beast that desires to dominate Cain, but Cain must master it. Because the grammar of this verse is almost identical to Genesis 3:16 (using the same Hebrew words for "desire" and "rule/master" and with pronouns that modify them), the latter passage is also often interpreted in a very negative way: the woman's "desire" is to try to dominate the man, but the man must "master" her 25For examples of this interpretation of Genesis 3:16, building on the interpretation of Genesis 4:7, see especially Susan T. Foh, "What Is the Woman's Desire?" Westminster Theological Journal 37 (1975): 376-383 (cf. idem, Women and the Word of God [Phillipsburg, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1979], 68, 69). A similar position is taken by, e.g., Samuele Bacchiocchi. Women in the Church: A Biblical Study on the Role of Women in the Church (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Biblical Perspectives, 1987), 79-84; and James B. Hurley, Man and Woman in Biblical Perspective (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 218, 219. Cf. Walter Vogels, "The Power Struggle Between Man and Woman (Gen. 3:16b)," Bib 77 (1996): 197-209, who likewise pictures Genesis 4:7 as a negative experience—sin as a wild animal crouching in wait for his prev —though he interprets it as descriptive and not prescriptive like Foh and others. GOP 161.3

A careful study of *Genesis 4:7* by one of my former doctoral students has challenged this negative interpretation based upon a close reading of the Hebrew text. <sup>26 Joachim Azevedo, "At the Door of Paradise: A Contextual Interpretation of Gen. 4:7," Biblische Notizen 100 (1999):45-59. My own more recent study builds upon his analysis,</sup>

looking at further facets of the Hebrew original, and arrives at the same basic conclusion. <sup>27Richard M.</sup> Davidson, "Shame and Honor in the Beginning: A Study of Genesis 4," in Shame and Honor: Presenting Biblical Themes in Shame and Honor Contexts, ed. Bruce L. Bauer (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Department of World Mission, Andrews University, 2014), 43-76. I share here only a few salient points of the research. First, elsewhere in Scripture there is no other reference to "sin" described as a demon or as a wild animal "lurking" after its prey, with the need for humans to "master" it. Such a picture seems out of character with the theology of sin in the rest of Scripture. *GOP 162.1* 

Second, the possessive pronoun "its/his" (in the phrase "its desire") in this verse is in the masculine, and therefore, according to a fundamental rule of Hebrew grammar in which the pronoun agrees with its antecedent noun in gender, the noun to which "its/his" refers should be in the masculine. But the word for "sin" is in the feminine! The nearest possible antecedent to the masculine possessive pronoun in this verse is "Abel" (verse 4)!*GOP 162.2* 

Third, Abel is the only one who fits in the literary flow of the overall shame-honor plot of the narrative. Abel is the one to whom Cain's anger/displeasure is implicitly directed in previous verses. In context, this displeasure is because he presumed that he had lost (or was in danger of losing) his firstborn status by his noncompliance with the prescribed ritual. Cain had been "shamed," and his face "fell" (in modern shame-honor language, he "lost face.") God promises that if he does well, he will be accepted: literally, his "face will be lifted up"—his honor will be restored. All of these points are supported by key Hebrew terminology in the text. 28See ibid., 3-19. GOP 162.3

Hence, the translation of *Genesis 4:7* becomes a positive one: "His [Abel's] desire will be for you, and you [Cain] will rule over him." God promises Cain that if he does well, the "desire" (or respect) of Abel for Cain will be restored, and Cain will have the predominance of the firstborn son as before. This translation is supported by the Septuagint Greek translation of the Old Testament (LXX): "to thee shall be his submission, and thou shalt rule over him." *GOP 162.4* 

Even though (to my knowledge) no modern Bible versions in Ellen

White's day (or even today) follow the LXX and gives this positive translation implied by the Hebrew original, Ellen White favors this translation already in several of her earliest statements interpreting Genesis 4:7. She clearly regards this passage (verse 7b) as referring to Cain and Abel in the context of restoring his firstborn status and its prerogatives of honor over Abel. Note her citation of Genesis 4:7b in the following: GOP 162.5

Abel's offering had been accepted; but this was because he had done in every particular as God required him to do. If Cain would correct his error, he would not be deprived of his birthright: Abel would not only love him as his brother, but, as the younger, would be subject to him. Thus the Lord declared to Cain, "Unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him." <sup>29Ellen G. White, "Abel's 'Excellent Sacrifice,' " Signs of the Times (Australia), Apr. 8, 1912, 230. GOP</sup>

Three more times Ellen White either cites or paraphrases Genesis 4:7b, giving this same basic interpretation: *GOP 163.1* 

Abel's offering had been accepted; but this was because he had done in every particular as God required him to do. If Cain would correct his error, he would not be deprived of his birthright: Abel would not only love him as his brother, but, as the younger, would be subject to him. Thus the Lord declared to Cain, "Unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him." <sup>30Ellen G. White, "Cain and Abel Tested," Signs of the Times, Dec. 16, 1886, 753. GOP 163.2</sup>

The angel tells Cain that it was no injustice on the part of God, or partiality shown to Abel; but that it was on account of his own sin, and disobedience of God's express command, why he could not respect his offering—and if he would do well he would be accepted of God, and his brother should listen to him, and he should take the lead, because he was the eldest. <sup>31</sup>Ellen G. White, The Spirit of Prophecy (Battle Creek, Mich.: Steam Press of the Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, 1870), 1:56; see also idem, Spiritual Gifts (Battle Creek, Mich.: Steam Press of the Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, 1864), 3:49; idem, The Story of Redemption (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald®, 1947), 53. GOP 163.3

There had been no injustice on the part of God, and no partiality shown to Abel; if he would do well he would be accepted of God, and his brother should listen to him, and he should take the lead, because he was the eldest. <sup>32Ellen G.</sup> White, "The Great Controversy Between Christ and His Angels and Satan and His Angels. Chapter Five, Cain and Abel," Signs of the Times, Feb. 6, 1879, 42-GOP 16.3 4

Remarkably, Ellen White follows an interpretive tradition (the LXX) that was not represented by the modern translations of her day. Likewise, she goes against the prevailing understanding in her day of the corresponding passage in *Genesis 3:16*, interpreting this text as a blessing in order to preserve the unity and harmony in the home. 33White, Patriarchs and Prophets, 58, 59: "Eve was told of the sorrow and pain that must henceforth be her portion. And the Lord said, 'Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.' In the creation God had made her the equal of Adam. Had they remained obedient to God—in harmony with His great law of love—they would ever have been in harmony with each other; but sin had brought discord, and now their union could be maintained and harmony preserved only by submission on the part of the one or the other. Eve had been the first in transgression; and she had fallen into temptation by separating from her companion, contrary to the divine direction. It was by her solicitation that Adam sinned, and she was now placed in subjection to her husband. Had the principles joined in the law of God been cherished by the fallen race, this sentence, though growing out of the results of sin, would have proved a blessing to them; but man's abuse of the supremacy thus given him has too often rendered the lot of woman very bitter and made her life a burden." For evidence that this view was virtually unique in the nineteenth century, see Davidson, Flame of Yahweh, 60-65. GOP 163.5

#### **Exodus 20: The Decalogue**

Another example of Ellen White's insight being consistent with the original Hebrew is found in regard to the Ten Commandments, recorded in *Exodus 20*. Ellen White makes an astounding comment about the Decalogue: "The Ten Commandments . . . are ten promises. . . . There is not a negative in that law, although it may appear thus." 34Ellen G. White, manuscript 41, 1896; idem, letter 89, 1898; published in The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, ed. Francis D. Nichol (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald®, 1953), 1:1105. When one reads the Ten Commandments, they seem to be replete with negatives. Eight of the ten commandments start with the words: "Thou shalt not . . ." How could Ellen White say there is no negative in the Decalogue? I had always understood this in the sense of "All His biddings are enablings," 35Ellen G. White, Christ's Object Lessons (Battle Creek, Mich.: Review and Herald®, 1900), 333. but I now believe there is a more direct and satisfying, yes, more biblical/exegetical explanation. *GOP 164.1* 

In light of Ellen White's statements, I looked closely at the Hebrew original of the Decalogue, examining the grammatical forms that are used in each one of the Ten Commandments. To my surprise, I found that the eight commandments that begin with "Thou shalt not" can, according to Hebrew grammar, be translated either as negative commands (prohibitions) or as emphatic promises. In harmony with the grammatical sentence structure one can translate these commandments thus: "[I promise you], you will not have any other gods before Me! . . . You will not make for yourself any carved image. . . . You will not take the name of the Lord your God in vain . .." "[I promise you that] you will not kill, commit adultery, steal, bear false witness, covet." Even the fourth and fifth commandments, which are not framed in the negative—"Remember the Sabbath . . . " "Honor your father and mother . . ."—do not use the imperative, which is the normal way of giving a positive command in biblical Hebrew. Rather, they use the infinitive absolute, which in Hebrew often indicates an intensive promise. God is saying, in effect, "[I promise youl, you will remember the Sabbath. You will honor your father and mother!" And so each of the commandments can be translated either as a command or a promise. 36For further discussion and substantiation, see, Richard M. Davidson, Lovesong for the Sabbath (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald®, 1988), 35-37; cf. the standard Hebrew grammar: E. Kautzsch, ed., Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar (Oxford: Clarendon, 1910), par. 113bb and 113ee. GOP 164.2

I suggest that Ellen White's insight is further reinforced by significance of the prologue recognizing the to Commandments. One's experience (and consequent translation) of the "Ten Words" all depends on where one begins the Ten Commandments. As a child I was taught the Decalogue started with verse 3, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." But that is not where the Ten Commandments begin. That is not where God starts speaking. The Decalogue begins in verse 2, where Yahweh says, "I am the Lord vour God who has brought vou out of the house of bondage." In effect, God says, "I have redeemed you by the blood of the Lamb. You are already saved and now I am going to promise you power to keep My law." If one starts in verse 2, the commandments that follow become promises: "I promise you, you won't have any other gods before Me. You won't take My name in vain. You will remember the Sabbath. You will honor your father and mother . . . "GOP 164.3

"There is not a negative in that law." Ellen White did not know Hebrew grammar, but under prophetic inspiration she provided a gospel-centered insight into the Word that is supported by the original language of the biblical passage. GOP 165.1

## Exodus 25:9, 40: The "Miniature Model" of the Heavenly Sanctuary

I spent nearly two years of my life writing my doctoral dissertation on the subject of typology. As a major part of my research I examined the various Hebrew and Greek words in the Old and New Testaments that are translated "type" or "pattern." In the Old Testament I concentrated on Exodus 25:9, 40, where Moses was told to make everything like the "pattern" (Heb. tabnit) that he was shown on the mountain. I did a detailed word study of the Hebrew term tabnit (which by the way, the LXX translates in Exodus 25:40 as typos or "type"), and examined how it was used elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible. After about six months of intensive research on the meaning of this Hebrew term. I concluded that the word tabnit in the Old Testament use of Exodus 25:9, 40 implies a "miniature model" of an original-so that what Moses saw on the mountain was a miniature model of the original sanctuary that he had seen in heaven. I documented this research in my (now-published) doctoral dissertation 37See Richard M. Davidson, Typology in Scripture: A Study of Hermeneutical Typos Structures (Berrien Springs, Mich.:Andrews University Press, 1981), 367-388. GOP 165.2

Shortly thereafter I was urged by one of my professors who had served on my dissertation committee to present the results of this research to a scholarly meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature. With fear and trepidation I presented my findings to a roomful of critical scholars, most of whom did not even believe in the reality of the heavenly sanctuary or the veracity of Scripture. After the presentation came the time for questions, and almost everyone in the room raised his/her hand! I looked for the trapdoor to open under my feet and release me from the imminent onslaught of criticism. But there was no escape. I prayed and began acknowledging the raised hands. To my shock and amazement (and likewise to the shock of the critical scholar moderating the meeting), everyone who made a comment not only agreed with my research but presented further evidence that he/she had discovered in favor of my conclusion! GOP 165.3

Shortly after returning from the Society of Biblical Literature presentation, during my devotional reading in one of Ellen White's

early books, *Spiritual Gifts*, I fortuitously encountered this electrifying statement: "God presented before Moses a *miniature model* of the heavenly sanctuary, and commanded him to make all things according to the pattern shown him in the mount." <sup>38White, Spiritual Gifts, 4a:5.</sup> (Italics supplied.) I wondered, how did Ellen White arrive at this insight into the meaning of the word *tabnit* as a "*miniature model*" of the original without any knowledge of Hebrew and no modern versions or contemporary commentaries providing this translation (at least none that I have been able to discover so far)? This whole experience was a striking confirmation to me of the accuracy of my conclusion regarding the meaning of *tabnit*, of the veracity of the typological approach toward the sanctuary doctrine, and of the reality of Ellen White's prophetic gift. *GOP 165.4* 

### Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28: The Fall of Satan and the Rise of Evil in the Universe

As a college student and aspiring theologian, I wrote my first theological research paper. The passages I chose to consider were Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28—passages that Seventh-day Adventists have traditionally regarded as referring to Satan and the origin of evil in heaven. Following the lead of various higher-critical commentaries. I came to the unsettling conclusion that neither passage made any reference to Satan or the origin of evil in its original context. Thus in my thinking major biblical supports for the Adventist understanding of the rise of the great controversy crumbled. Inasmuch as Ellen White supported the "Satan, great controversy" view of these passages, 39See, e.g., Ellen G. White, The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan During the Christian Dispensation, rev. and enl. ed. (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald®, 1888), 492-504, the chapter "The Origin of Evil," in which both passages are cited repeatedly. Lalso subconsciously entertained and imbibed doubts about the veracity of her interpretations of Scripture. GOP 166.1

Since that time, to my delight I have found compelling exegetical evidence that both Isaiah and Ezekiel were indeed referring to Satan in these passages. Much of this evidence is set forth in an Andrews University dissertation by Jose Bertoluci entitled "The Son of the Morning and the Guardian Cherub in the Context of the Controversy Between Good and Evil." 40 José Bertoluci, "The Son of the Morning and the Guardian Cherub in the Context of the Controversy Between Good and Evil" (Th.D. diss., Andrews University Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, 1985). Bertoluci has dealt a devastating blow to the critical views that Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 describe only earthly, historical enemies of Israel and not Satan. He shows how in each passage there is a movement from the local, historical realm of earthly kings to the heavenly supernatural realm describing Lucifer/ Satan and the rise of the great controversy. My own study has uncovered further evidence supporting this conceptual shift in Ezekiel 28—from earthly "prince" (nagid, the king of Tyre [verses 1-10]) to cosmic "king" (melek, the supernatural ruler of Tyre, Satan himself [verses 11-19])—and I have discovered that this judgment upon the fallen cherub comes at the climactic chiastic center of the

whole book. 41Richard M. Davidson, "Revelation/Inspiration in the Old Testament," Issues in Revelation and Inspiration, Adventist Theological Society Occasional Papers, vol. 1, ed. Frank Holbrook and Leo Van Dolson (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Adventist Theological Society Publications, 1992), 118, 119; idem, "The Chiastic Literary Structure of the Book of Ezekiel," in To Understand the Scriptures: Essays in Honor of William H. Shea, ed. David Merling (Berrien Springs, Mich.: The Institute of Archaeology/ Siegfried H. Horn Archaeological Museum, 1997), 71-93, especially 87-89. See also my forthcoming chapter in a Festschrift edited by Gerhard Pfandl entitled "Ezekiel 28:11-19 and the Rise of the Cosmic Conflict." The origin of evil in Lucifer the covering cherub, presented by Ellen White, is thus solidly grounded in *Isaiah 14* and *Ezekiel 28*. Her interpretation of these passages is sound. *GOP* 166.2

Until very recently, however, one aspect of the rise of the great controversy that is familiar to Adventists from Ellen White's descriptions seemed to remain without biblical support. In *Patriarchs and Prophets and The Great Controversy* some 17 pages delineate how before his expulsion from heaven Satan went about among the angels slandering the character and government of God as unjust. <sup>42</sup>White, Patriarchs and Prophets, 35-43; The Great Controversy, 493-500. This major scene of the great controversy story can at best only be inferred from biblical statements about Satan as "a murderer from the beginning and . . . a liar" (*John 8:44*) and "the accuser of our brethren . . . [being] cast down [from heaven]" (*Rev. 12:10*). But is there a more explicit biblical foundation for Satan's insidious activity of celestial slander even before the creation of this world, as described by Ellen White? *GOP 167.1* 

By serendipity I was examining a claim by one scholar that much of the description of Satan in *Ezekiel 28* is only symbolic and not literal, since—it was argued—he is described as engaged in "an abundance of trading" (verse 16) and obviously Lucifer was not literally a heavenly merchant. *GOP 167.2* 

I decided to examine the Hebrew word for "trading," and came to a surprising and (at least for me) exciting discovery. The verb *rakal*, from which this noun derives, literally means to "go about, from one to another (for trade or gossip)." <sup>43BDB</sup>, <sup>940</sup>. The noun derivative

rakil means "slanderer, tale-bearer," and appears six times in the Old Testament, once in Ezekiel (22:9). The other noun derivative rekullah —which is the word for "trading" found in Ezekiel 28:16—appears only in the book of Ezekiel, and all four occurrences come in our section under discussion dealing with Tyre (26:12; 28:5, 16, 18). Most modern versions translate this word throughout as "traffic, trade" or "merchandise," but since the word appears only in this section of the Bible, the context must be the final determiner of meaning. GOP 167.3

In descriptions of the merchant city of Tyre, the meaning "traffic" or "trade" fits the context well (*Eze. 26:12*; *28:5*). But with reference to the portrayals of the covering cherub in *Ezekiel 28:16*, *18*, the notion of "trade" does not seem to naturally fit the context. This is recognized by the noted critical exegete Walther Eichrodt, who comments on this passage: "The description of the trespass is a little unexpected, since trade is here suddenly represented as the source of iniquity." <sup>44</sup>Walther Eichrodt, Ezekiel: A Commentary, Old Testament Library (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1970), 394. GOP 167 4

Since this noun is derived from the verb that means "go about, from one to another-either for trade or gossip/slander," it appears very likely that Ezekiel deliberately chooses this rare Hebrew word (instead of the more common term sakhar) because it has a potential double meaning. Ezekiel here seems to employ a literary device known as a paranomasia, or play on word meaning. Inhabitants of the historical mercantile city of Tyre (mentioned in the first half of the chapter) clearly "went about, from one to another" for trade among the nations. Likewise the ultimate ruler of Tyre, Satan (verses 11-19), in the heavenly "mountain of God" also "went about, from one to another"-not for trade of goods, but for gossip or slander among the angels. Both the earthly and supernatural rulers were literally engaged in "trafficking," one in merchandise, and the other in slander against God. <sup>45Revelation</sup> 18 seems to capture this double nuance of Ezekiel's usage. In a passage clearly alluding to Ezekiel 28, the angel speaks of the "merchandise" of various material things in verses 12, 13, but the list concludes by shifting to the spiritual realm: "merchandise . . . of the souls of men."GOP 167.5

The immediate context of Ezekiel 28:16 portrays the fall of the

covering cherub from perfection (verse 15) to pride (verse 17). In this setting verses 16 and 18 supply his ensuing steps to perdition. We can best translate verse 16: "By the abundance of your slander [rekullah] you [Satan] became filled with violence within, and you sinned. Therefore I cast you as a profane thing out of the mountain of God . . ." With deft brushstrokes Ezekiel paints the picture of Lucifer's going about in slander against God, which eventually ripens into open and violent rebellion. Verse 18 reveals that after his expulsion from heaven the fallen cherub continues on earth his "iniquity of slander [rekullah]" against God, and the verse also records the divine sentence of Satan's destined fiery destruction because of his "multitude of iniquities." GOP 168.1

A closer look at the nature of Satan's slander in the original Hebrew also corroborates Ellen White's repeated statements that Lucifer was accusing God of being unjust in His law and in His treatment of himself. Ellen White states: GOP 168.2

The exaltation of the Son of God as equal with the Father was represented as an act of injustice to Lucifer, who, it was claimed, was also entitled to reverence and honor. . . . There had been no change in the position or authority of Christ. Lucifer's envy and misrepresentation and his claims to equality with Christ had made necessary a statement of the true position of the Son of God; but this had been the same from the beginning. Many of the angels were, however, blinded by Lucifer's deceptions. <sup>46White, Patriarchs</sup> and Prophets, 37. Cf. ibid., 40: "The preference shown to Christ declared an act of injustice both to himself and to all the heavenly host." Again, White, The Great Controversy, 495: "He [Lucifer] sought to create sympathy for himself by representing that God had dealt unjustly with him in bestowing supreme honor upon Christ." *GOP 168.3* 

According to *Ezekiel 28:15*, the guardian cherub was "blameless" (*tamim*) in his ways until "iniquity" ('*awlah*) was found in him. Although many translations render 'awlah as "iniquity," "wrongdoing," "unrighteousness," or the like, the first definition of this word given by a standard Hebrew lexicon is "injustice," and the major headings of meanings in the lexicon are "*violent deeds of injustice*," "*injustice* of speech," and "injustice, in general." <sup>47BDB</sup>, <sup>732.</sup> I suggest that the use of this specific word for "injustice" rather

than a general term for "iniquity" or "sin," when viewed in the light of other biblical passages relating to the fall of Satan, may imply that the quardian cherub cherished a sense of injustice with regard to God's government, His dealings with him, and his exclusion from a place of equality with God. 48Even here in Ezekiel 28, verse 17 speaks of the cherub's pride because of his beauty: Isa. 14:14 expresses Lucifer's desire to be like the Most High; other biblical passages depict the preincarnate Christ as "the Angel of the Lord" (e.g., Gen. 16:7, 13; 22:11, 16; Ex. 3:2; 13:21; 14:19; Judges 6:11, 14, 22) and Michael the archangel (Dan. 10:13, 21; 12:1; 1 Thess. 4:16; Jude 9; Rev. 12:7), apparently taking the form of an angel. Lucifer apparently became jealous of Christ, who was God but appeared as an angel, and felt it was unjust that he was not included in the heavenly counsels between the Father and the Son. Such descriptions of Satan's injustice fit with the overall portrayal of the cosmic conflict in Scripture as the revelation of the justice of God, as will be the climactic exclamation of the universe when the great controversy comes to an end:. "Just and true are Your ways, O King of saints. . . . Just and righteous are His judgments" (Rev. 15:3; 19:2). GOP 168 4

Satan's celestial slander against God's justice during the rise of the great controversy is not just an Adventist version of the story drawn from the extrabiblical inspiration of Ellen White—it is striking biblical truth! <sup>49</sup>For further discussion of Satan's slanderous activity attempting to defame God's justice, as presented in this passage, see Richard M. Davidson, "Satan's Celestial Slander," Perspective Digest 1, no. 1 (1996): 31-34. The lesser light once again has pointed us to the greater light! *GOP* 169.1

#### Conclusion

I have not done an exhaustive search of Ellen White's personal library (which I hope to undertake in the near future) to determine how many of the biblical insights I have surveyed above are found in books to which she had access. In my limited search I have not found any support in nineteenth-century scholars or Bible translations for most of the conclusions I have summarized above. But even if some ideas are found to have been drawn from these sources, this will not change my basic thesis. It would still need to be explained how Ellen White was guided to select these particular biblical insights and to leave aside the more commonly held conclusions of her time that do not stand the test of later and closer exegetical study. GOP 169.2

This paper presents only a sample of many similar "burning heart" experiences I have had as a Hebrew exegete-instances in which Ellen White has captured nuances of meaning in biblical passages that have become apparent in the original Hebrew and Greek but are not represented by modern translations; or conversely, instances in which Ellen White has provided details about the biblical narratives that I had always assumed were unique to her and not recorded in Scripture, but have later learned are supported by a close reading of the biblical text in the original languages. A similar kind of testimony could be given regarding details of historical geography, where Ellen White's picturesque descriptions of the localities in which biblical events took place—no doubt based upon her having seen these events in vision—are strikingly confirmed by the recent research of Old Testament geographers and archaeologists, when such information was (as far as I have been able to determine) not available in the historical geographies of Ellen White's day. GOP 169.3

In the past few months I have shared some of the points presented in this paper with several of my colleagues in the Old Testament Department at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University, and have been gratified to learn that they also have had a similar experience with the writings of Ellen White when comparing her insights with their own research into Scripture in the original languages. They have compiled their own lists of instances

where Ellen White's detailed insights concerning biblical passages and events, which they had assumed were not addressed in the Scriptures, are in fact supported by a close reading of the biblical text in the original languages. GOP 169.4

Also comforting is the fact that my colleagues also have their mental "shelf" where unsolved problems remain, awaiting resolution at some providentially arranged "serendipitous moments" in their study of the Scriptures, or, if not before, explained by the Master Interpreter Himself in the soon-coming kingdom. I look forward to that glorious disclosure by the One who inspired both the biblical writers and Filen Whitel GOP 169.5

# Chapter 8 - The Meaning of "to Prophesy" in 1 Corinthians 14

Larry L. Lichtenwalter

#### Can We All Prophesy?

The spiritual gift of prophecy was pervasive during New Testament times 11 Cor. 14:26. See E. Earle Ellis, Prophecy and Hermeneutic in Early Christianity (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 24-30; Gordon D. Fee, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 590, 591. The numerous biblical references to prophets and prophecies in relation to the specific mention of other speech-related gifts reveals a lively prophetic phenomenon in the church's missionary and nurture enterprise 2Acts 2:17, 18; 11:27, 28; 13:1-3; 15:32; 19:6; 21:4, 9-11; Rom. 12:4-6; 1 Cor. 11:4, 5; 12:10, 28, 29; 13:2, 8, 9; 14:1, 3-6, 22, 24, 26, 29, 31, 32, 37, 39; Eph. 3:5; 4:11; 1 Thess. 5:20; 1 Tim. 1:18; 4:14; Rev. 1:3; 10:11; 11:6, 10. 18; 16:6; 18:20, 24; 19:10; 22:6, 7, 9, 18, 19. The Pentecostal outpouring of the Spirit of prophecy promised by Joel 2:28-30 meant not only the continuation or renewal of the prophecy of ancient Israel, but also that prophecy was potentially available to all who would be filled by the Spirit (cf. Acts 2:17-18). See Fee, 595; Charles H. Talbert, Reading Corinthians: A Literary and Theological Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians, rev. ed. (Macon, Ga.: Smyth & Helwys, 2002), 112. It is the only constant in Paul's lists of charismata 31 Cor. 12:8-11, 28-30; 13:1, 2; Rom. 12:6-8. See F. David Farnell, "The Gift of Prophecy in the Old and New Testaments," Bibliotheca Sacra 149, no. 4 (1992): 397 and most always in the context of ecclesiology. GOP 171.1

This prophetic activity apparently included some coworkers of the apostles who were engaged in preaching, teaching, and church organization. <sup>4Eph.</sup> 3:4-6; cf. 1 Tim. 4:14; Acts 13:1-3; 15:32-34; Eph. 4:11, 12. These prophetic coworkers appear most vividly in association with the apostle Paul as per the book of Acts and Pauline literature. See Ellis, 3-44; Fee, 620, 621. As prophecy belongs to the leadership gifts, these coworkers exerted significant foundational leadership and mentoring authority through their exposition and application of Scripture. <sup>5Rom.</sup> 12:6; 1 Cor. 12:10, 28; Eph. 2:20; 4:11, 12. They appear as both itinerant workers and workers in local congregations. <sup>6Acts</sup> 13:1-3; 15:32-34; 19:9-11; Rom. 12:6; 1 Cor. 14:29; 1 Tim. 4:14. See Cecil M. Robeck, "Prophecy, Prophesying," in Dictionary of Paul and His Letters, ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne and Ralph P. Martin (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 757. Their prophetic gift was employed at times in a prominent way at worship services.

71 Cor. 14:1-3, 6, 22-26, 29; 1 Thess. 5:19-22. Ellis, 27 They were associated with but not identical with the apostles. 8Eph. 2:20; 3:5; 4:11. Their need to be tested in no way suggests a secondary status of their prophetic ministry. 91 Thess. 5:19-21; 1 Cor. 14:37, 38; cf. 1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 3:5. Grudem incorrectly argues for varying status of prophetic ministry. See discussion of issue: Wayne Grudem, The Gift of Prophecy in the New Testament and Today (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 2000), 27-49; Robert L. Thomas, "Prophecy Rediscovered: A Review of the Gift of Prophecy in the New Testament Today," Bibliotheca Sacra 149, no. 593 (1992): 96; Norman Geisler, Systematic Theology (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2011), 1184, 1185. GOP

In 1 Corinthians 14, however, the apostle Paul "appears" to extend the gift of prophecy beyond the leadership gifts to potentially include all believers in local churches: "desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy" (1 Cor. 14:1,); 10Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from the New American Standard Bible. "now I wish that you all spoke in tongues, but even more that you would prophesy; and greater is the one who prophesies than the one who speaks in tongues" (verse 5); "let two or three prophets speak, and let others pass judgment" (verse 29); "for you can all prophecy one by one" (verse 31); "desire earnestly to prophesy" (verse 39). GOP 172.1

At first read, these verses "appear" to suggest some kind of "ordinary congregational prophecy" <sup>11</sup>Grudem, 48, 49. that could occur in local Christian congregations in a worship context. If true, such informally recognized prophets <sup>12</sup>Grudem asserts that during New Testament times the word "prophet" did not refer to a clearly defined, publicly recognized group or church office, but rather was only used in a descriptive or functional sense so that anyone who prophesied might be called a "prophet." See ibid., <sup>161-167</sup>. would be more immediately relevant to a local church than would leadership prophets, whom most local congregations might hardly ever see. <sup>13</sup>Ibid., <sup>47</sup>. This is interpreted by some as in keeping with perceived Pentecost implications of *Joel 2:28-30* and that the prophetic gift "is available—at least potentially—to all." <sup>14</sup>Fee writes, "Although some people are called prophets, the implication of 1 Corinthians 14:24, 25, 30, 31 is that the gift is available—at least potentially—to

all" ("Gifts of the Spirit," in Dictionary of Paul and His Letters, ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne and Ralph P. Martin [Downers Grove, III.: InterVarsity Press, 1993], 346). See Acts 2:17, 18; cf. 1 Cor. 14:3, 26. GOP 172.2

But can we all prophesy? Are there multiple kinds of prophecy in the New Testament (apostolic, apostolic coworker, ordinary/congregational)? Are there degrees of prophetic experience, content, scope, veracity, and authority? What is the spiritual gift of prophecy? Is it right to seek it? Can Christians use it in their churches today without compromising the supremacy of Scripture? Was the prophetic phenomenon in Corinth authentic or a strife-causing distortion? *GOP 172.3* 

These are challenging questions that modern readers face when reading 1 Corinthians 14. Pentecostal and charismatic movements turn to this Bible passage for support of believers' spontaneous ecstatic speech that uplifts and encourages others in faithful obedience and service, self-proclaimed prophets foretelling future events, private revelations, as well as prophecies and visions—"a word from the Lord" and "the Lord showed me." Even some Seventh-day Adventists are saying today, "God showed me" and "God told me." *GOP 172.4* 

What is this passage really teaching us? What is the meaning of "to prophesy" in *1 Corinthians 14*? Adventist readers will further wonder how the interpretation of this passage impacts Adventist understandings of the gift of prophecy as an eschatological phenomenon in the remnant church. <sup>15Rev.</sup> 12:17; 19:10; cf. 10:11; 22:6-9. GOP 173.1

This study begins with an overview of the larger context in which prophecy in 1 Corinthians 14 occurs. This larger 1 Corinthians textual backdrop provides meaningful insight into the varied nuances reflected in specific terms used in chapter 14—prophets, prophecy, and to prophesy. And it is helpful toward formulating a broad understanding of the prophetic phenomenon as a gift, an activity, and a role. The limitations of prophecy are then explored so as to further outline prophecy's contours and implications. Finally, we compare several key Pauline assertions regarding prophecy in 1 Corinthians 14 with Adventist understandings of the gift of prophecy



#### Pursuing What Is Better—Prophecy

Paul's explanation of prophecy takes place "in a sustained corrective discussion of an apparent unbridled use of tongues in the Corinthian church "16Fee, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 652; Robeck, In chapter 12 he argues for diversity of spiritual gifts where tongues are only one among many manifestations of the Spirit. 171 Cor. 12:4-11, 28-30. This diversity of spiritual gifts reflects authentic Christological confession (1 Cor. 12:2, 3), baptism in the Holy Spirit (verse 13), 18The locative prepositional phrase "in the Spirit" expresses the reality in which Corinthian believers have all been immersed—the Holy Spirit. Paul has their common experience of conversion in mind, and does so in terms of its most crucial ingredient, the receiving of the Spirit. Believers (many members with diverse spiritual gifts) thus experience the very context and nature of the body—"in the Spirit." See Fee, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 605, 606; Kenneth E. Bailey, Paul Through Mediterranean Eyes: Cultural Studies in 1 Corinthians (Downers Grove, III.: IVP Academic, 2011), 325-348. No "second experience of some kind" is implied. and the mutual dependence of believers on one another as members of the same body in Christ (verses 12-26). 19D. A. Carson, Showing the Spirit: A Theological Exposition of 1 Corinthians 12-14 (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1987),15-50; Talbert, 103-108.<sub>GOP 173.3</sub>

In chapter 13 Paul insists that no matter what gift one might have or how spiritual they might be, it counts for nothing unless it is manifested in love (1 Cor. 12:31-14:1a). <sup>20</sup>There is the motivation of love (1 Cor. 13:1-3), the way of love (verses 4-7), the enduring reality of love (verse 8), the supremacy of love (verse 13). This superiority of love and its characterization falls into an aba' pattern: (a) the superiority of love—verses 1-3; (b) the characterization of love—verses 4-7; (a') the superiority of love—verses 8-13 (see Talbert, 109). Here not only is there a comparison drawn between love and such gifts as tongues and prophecy—which are later contrasted in chapter 14—but what love is and is not seem to be cast in categories designed to combat the specific problem in the Corinthian church. <sup>21</sup>Carson, 53. GOP 173.4

Chapter 14 "builds on this broad theological framework" <sup>22Fee, The</sup> First Epistle to the Corinthians, 652. by emphasizing the intelligibility (1

Cor. 14:1-25) and order (verses 25-40) that is necessary for improving spiritual life, moral orientation, and unity within the body. The "greater gifts" he speaks of earlier (1 Cor. 12:31) <sup>23There is both</sup> correspondence and a shift of emphasis between chapters 12 and 14: "earnestly desire the greater charismata" (1 Cor. 12:31) is contrasted with "desire earnestly ta pneumatika" (1 Cor. 14:1). At the end of chapter 12 Paul is speaking of the gifts themselves as gracious endowments. At the opening of chapter 14 Paul focuses on the activity of the Spirit in the community worship context. See ibid., 654, 655. are those that edify the community. <sup>24lbid., 654.</sup> 1 Cor. 14:4, 5, 12, 17, 26; cf. 1 Cor. 12:7. GOP 174.1

Paul chooses prophecy to represent these "greater gifts." 25These edifying spiritual gifts include: prophecy, teaching, revelation, knowledge, words spiritual discernment. evangelism. apostolic administration, and exhortation (1 Cor. 14:6, 26; cf. 1 Cor. 12:8-10, 28, 29; Eph. 4:11; Rom. 12:6-8). Ibid. asserting that prophecy is to be desired more than speaking in tongues. This is so because the one who prophesies edifies, exhorts, and consoles (1 Cor. 14:3). <sup>261bid.</sup> 1 Cor. 14:3-5; cf. verses 26, 31. The first word, "edification" (oikodomen), controls the thought of the entire chapter, as well as provides an understanding of the inherent nature of authentic prophecy. <sup>27Talbert, 110.</sup> The chapter is bracketed by a literary inclusio verses 1 and 39 "seek to prophesy" —within which a sharp comparison between speaking in tongues and prophecy is asserted: "Greater is the one who prophesies than the one who speaks in tongues" (verse 5). The unexpected contrast within the inclusio both defines the meaning of "greater gift" in the earlier exhortation (1 Cor. 12:31) and provides understanding precisely why prophecy is to be considered greater, i.e., it edifies. Prophecy though is not inherently greater than speaking in tongues, or any other gift for that matter, since all gifts are from the same Spirit and are for the common good (verses 7-11). <sup>28Fee, The First Epistle to the</sup> Corinthians, 653. Yet prophecy is greater than speaking in tongues <sup>29A</sup> diversity of presuppositions determine the translation of the noun glossa—generic "tongue," "language," or "ecstatic utterance." The Pentecost event described in Acts 2:5-11—in which the crowds heard the 120 speaking in various foreign languages rather than their own—provides the strongest background for Paul's discussion in 1 Corinthians 12-14. "Tongues" refers to "foreign languages,"

something that would have been very evident in an international commercial community such as Corinth, where a cacophony of languages must have been spoken. The communication problems, created by this multiplicity of languages, surface in Paul's discussion in 1 Corinthians 14 (cf. 1 Cor. 14:8-10). Paul is concerned about the foreigner, the unbeliever, and the outsider. His point is that unknown foreign languages divide people; they do not unite. Understanding (by interpretation of a foreign language where necessary) is in keeping with Paul's overarching concern for edification. Speaking in a foreign language for the sake of speaking in a foreign language without interpretation and without regard for the life and participation of the community was an abuse and divisive. See Bailey, 392-394; Dictionary of Paul and His Letters, s.v. "Tongues." precisely because it is intelligible and therefore can edify. 30Fee, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 659. GOP 174 2

This broad overview suggests that prophesying may not have been a problem in Corinth. It suggests too that what Paul asserts regarding prophecy should be understood in relation to how he is using it as a corrective with respect to the abuse of the gift of tongues. GOP 174.3

Yet some would still argue that because Paul restricts the focus of discussion of spiritual gifts in general to just two-prophecy and tonques-there may have been some distortion, some dispute or uncertainty about prophecy as well. 31Carson, 100. Carson suggests: "It is even possible that the Corinthians lumped both gifts under the rubric of prophecy. and it is Paul who is making the distinction." However, while Paul does largely restrict his discussion to prophecy and tongues, there are other noticeable speech-related edifying gifts in view-knowledge, teaching (1 Cor. 14:6, 26). Some of Paul's statements are construed to imply: (1) that there were prophecies that needed to be sifted for veracity (1 Cor. 14:29); 32Grudem, 54-62. (2) that there were some prophecies that were intentionally withheld-and perhaps, in the process, neglected or lost (verse 30): 33lbid., 62-66. (3) that there were degrees of prophetic experience, scope, veracity, and authority (verses 29, 32, 36, 37, 38); (4) that some individuals prophesying might not speak with divine authority (verse 36); 341bid., 66, 67. (5) that prophesying in Corinth, like speaking in tongues, had become disorderly (verse 31); (6) that there were shy, inexperienced, or would-be prophets in the Corinthian community (verse 37); and (7) that Corinthian

prophets obviously had less authority than the apostle (*verses 37*, 38). <sup>35lbid., 67, 68.</sup> We will find, however, that none of these possibilities is the case. *GOP 175.1* 

However one relates to these possibilities of a Corinthian misuse of prophecy, Paul's focus is clearly on a love engendered intelligible, orderly, and edifying speech—whether speaking in tongues or prophesying. Pursuing "what is better" means prioritizing prophecy over uninterpreted tongues. *GOP 175.2* 

But why was prophecy considered the better way? Was it prophecy itself that was better? Or was it what prophecy best displayed, i.e., a spiritual gift of inspired speech that without a doubt would always edify? If the latter, prophecy in fact then would best represent the intended characteristics of every speech-related spiritual gift. *GOP* 175.3

Chapter 14 divides into two sections: (1) a Pauline thesis in two parts with supporting arguments (verses 1-19); and (2) two Corinthian assertions followed by their Pauline responses (verses 20-36). The chapter closes with a concluding summary (verses 37-40). There are three arguments in favor of prophecy in public worship (verses 6-12), and there are three arguments in favor of interpreted tongues in public worship (verses 13-19). <sup>36Talbert, 110</sup>. The chapter reflects Paul's most explicit and extended treatment of prophecy. <sup>37Robeck, 759</sup>. *GOP 175.4* 

An overview of the chapter's bracketing inclusio and related outline facilitates understanding of the role prophecy plays in Paul's arguments: • Seek to prophesy (verse 1, subjunctive—zeloute... hina prophetreuete) GOP 175.5

- Prophecy is superior to uninterpreted tongues (verses 2-5)*GOP* 176.1
- Uninterpreted tongues don't edify (verses 6-19) GOP 176.2
- Uninterpreted tongues don't convert unbelievers or believers (verses 20-23) *GOP 176.3*

- Prophecy will convert unbelievers and believers (verses 22, 24, 25) *GOP 176.4*
- Prophecy and tongues in worship must be orderly (verses 26-35)*GOP 176.5*
- Prophecy requires evaluation (verse 29; cf. 1 Cor. 12:10)*GOP* 176.6
- Prophecy has an objective point of reference (verses 36-38)*GOP* 176.7
- Seek to prophesy (verses 39, 40, infinitive—zeloute to propheteuein) GOP 176.8

#### Prophets, Prophecy, and Prophesying

Prophecy is the most mentioned of all the Holy Spirit's charismata described within the writings of Paul, "implying the widest range of occurrence in the Pauline churches." 38E.g., 1 Thess. 5:20; 1 Cor. 11:4, 5; 12-14; Rom. 12:6; Eph. 2:20; 3:5; 4:11; 1 Tim. 1:18; 4:14; and probably "through the Spirit" in 2 Thess. 2:2. See Fee, "Gifts of the Spirit," 346. This is especially so in 1 Corinthians 12-14, 39Robeck, 755. These three chapters unfold varied nuances of the prophetic gift: prophecy as a Spiritinspired phenomenon (*propheteia*): 401 Cor. 12:10; 13:2, 8; 14:6, 22. prophesy as a dynamic Spirit-inspired activity (propheteuo); 411 Cor. 13:9; 14:1, 3-5, 24, 31, 39. and prophet as a Spirit-inspired person/role (prophetes and ho propheteuon). 421 Cor. 12:28, 29; 14:29, 32, 37; also 14:3-5. Paul fluidly alternates between using the noun for "prophet" (ho prophētēs) and a substantive participle, "the one who prophesies" (ho prophēteuōn). Robeck, 757. Fourteen of these 20 references occur in chapter 14 alone ("prophecy," two times; "prophesy," eight times; and "prophet," four times). Nearly two-thirds of chapter 14's references are a verbal form implying a lively prophetic phenomenon. The verb to prophesy denotes an active process: dynamic reception and transmission of Holy Spirit originating revelation 43Wayne A. Grudem, The Gift of Prophecy in 1 Corinthians (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1982), 115, 139-143. See also Carson, 93, 94. The activity of prophesying seems to predominate over the gift itself. 44Fee, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 655, note 13GOP 176.9

This "live" revelatory experience happens in "a context of community, accountability, mutual development, good order, intelligible worship, and ministry on behalf of others." <sup>45Robeck, 758</sup>. The earlier metaphorical portrayal of the church as the body of Christ in conjunction with spiritual gifts <sup>461 Cor. 12:7-31; cf. Rom. 12:3-8; Eph. 4:7-16.</sup> suggests that the interrelationship between the various parts of the body working together in their unity and diversity is the locus in which the gift of prophecy is most richly manifested. <sup>47Robeck, 758</sup>. Prophecy is a community phenomenon. Prophecies are to be shared with the church. The community of believers is the

appropriate and expected context for the exercise of this Spirit-prompted speech gift. <sup>48</sup>Mark J. Cartledge, "Charismatic Prophecy and New Testament Prophecy," Themelios 1, no. 17 (October/November 1991): 19. Discernment and judgment of the prophecy is to be exercised by the community before being accepted. <sup>49</sup>Ibid. *GOP 176.10* 

Furthermore, prophecy as a community phenomenon "is an unmistakable sign or indication of God's presence and blessings" in a church (1 Cor. 14:22). <sup>50</sup>Grudem, 153. It shows that God is actively present— something even an outsider who visits will be able to recognize: "if an unbeliever or someone who does not understand comes in while everybody is prophesying, he will be convinced by all that he is a sinner and will be judged by all, and the secrets of his heart will be laid bare. So he will fall down and worship God. exclaiming, 'God is really among you!'" (verses 24, 25, NIV [1984]). 511 Corinthians 14:20-25 is a very challenging passage with many complex or torturous explanations. See Carson, 108-116; Grudem, 145-154; Fee, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 679-688. The moral renewal envisioned accentuates the true nature of Spirit-engendered prophecy in the church. <sup>52Carson, 116.</sup>Prophecy has the capacity to convict both believers. <sup>53Grudem, 154.</sup> The result of this unbelievers and convicting process brings an internal work, as the secrets of the heart are laid bare. The emphasis here is on the existential revelatory aspect of prophecy in relation to biblical truth and the living Christ. 541 Cor. 14:25; cf. 1 Cor. 4:4, 5; Heb. 4:12, 13. Fee, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 686. The Greek for "laid bare" is phanera, which points to the living God, who knows and searches the human heart (1 Sam. 16:7; 1 Chron. 28:9; Ps. 139:1, 23; Jer. 17:10; etc.). The final result of such exposure before God is repentance and conversion. 55Fee, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 687. The imagery is thoroughly Old Testament. Such confession before God is the "sign" 56lbid. that prophecy is for "believers." 57lbid. It is a vivid evidence of God's presence, activity, and blessing. GOP 177.1

As a verbal manifestation of the Holy Spirit, <sup>58lbid., 595.</sup> prophecy was a gift given to an individual (verse 30); it had a spontaneous, relevant quality (verses 3, 22, 24, 25, 30); it did not force one to speak against one's will (verses 30, 32a); it enabled the prophet to

know something from a divine perspective (verses 24, 25); it functioned for evangelism (verses 24, 25), for upbuilding, encouragement, and consolation of the church (verse 3), as well as for learning (verse 31); it would cease at the Parousia (*1 Cor. 13:8*, 10). <sup>59Talbert.</sup> The primary focus was "not the future, but the present situations of the people of God." <sup>60Fee, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 657. Prophecy thus consisted of "spontaneous, Spirit-inspired, intelligible messages, orally delivered in the gathered assembly, intended for the edification or encouragement of the people." <sup>61Ibid.</sup> GOP 177.2</sup>

The special and deeply rooted association of the Spirit with prophecy (1 Cor. 12-14) 62Ellis, 28. Note the parallelism in 1 Thessalonians 5:19, 20: "Do not quench the Spirit; do not despise prophetic utterances." indicates that the nature of the envisioned prophetic activity is clearly informed by the nature of prophecy as it is expressed by the true prophets of Israel 63Robeck, 755. Throughout Scripture the Spirit and prophecy are nearly synonymous (1 Thess. 5:19, 20; 1 Peter 1:10; Num. 11:29; 1 Sam. 10:10; 19:20; 2 Peter 1:21; 1 John 4:1). The book of Revelation refers to how "the God of the spirits of the prophets" is at work to show what is to take place (Rev. 22:6). It also explicitly links the Spirit and prophecy, i.e., "the Spirit of prophecy" (Rev. 19:10; cf. Rev. 22:9). Prophecy and revelation are clearly linked together as the idea of "revelation" (apokalupsei) is mentioned in the midst of Paul's very specific treatment of prophecy (1 Cor. 14:6, 26, 29-31). A parallelism in 1 Corinthians 14:6 connects revelation with prophecy and knowledge with teaching. 641bid., 759. "What will I profit you unless I speak to you either by way of revelation or knowledge or of prophecy or teaching?" Prophecy "comes by way of revelation. The revelation when spoken forms the basis of the prophecy. And both revelation (1 Cor. 2:10) and prophecy (1 Cor. 12:8) come by means of the Holy Spirit." 65lbid. A prophet was "a person who spoke to God's people under the inspiration of the Snirit " 66Fee, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 595. Additionally, there is possible linkage of prophecy to the idea of "mystery" (musterion). where Paul seems to imply that those who possess prophetic abilities and who understand all mysteries and knowledge are the same person. 671 Cor. 13:2; cf. 1 Cor. 2:1, 7, 10; 4:1. While a conditional phrase in Greek should not be used as evidence, such linkage between prophecy

and mystery is tacitly apparent elsewhere. If we connect Paul's use of mystery here with his other uses in 1 Corinthians as well as elsewhere in the New Testament, we will observe that this includes large prophetic themes, including Christ's paradoxical work on the cross, the resurrection, apocalyptic wisdom, etc. (see G. K. Beale, Hidden but Now Revealed: A Biblical Theology of Mystery (Downers Grove, III.: IVP Academic, 2014), 125. See also, Robeck, 759; Carson, 59, 60. 68. 1 Cor. 2:1, 7; 4:1; cf. Acts Knowing "mysteries" and "knowledge," then, even if only in part, is viewed as a normal component of the gift of prophecy. *GOP 178.1* 

These nuances (prophecy—together with the Holy Spirit, revelation, knowledge, mysteries, teaching) highlight the biblical eschatological nature of New Testament prophecy as a divine disclosure of the gospel and its implications for contemporary life. <sup>681</sup> Cor. 2:1, 7; 4:1; cf. Acts 2:16-36; Rom. 16:25; Eph. 1:9; 3:3, 9; 6:19; Col. 1:26, 27; Rev. 10:7; 1 Peter 1:10, 11. This word cluster likewise affirms how the nature of New Testament prophecy, in its essence, is the same as that of the Old Testament. It also signifies how the prophetic phenomenon envisioned in 1 Corinthians reflects phenomenon akin to themes evident in apocalyptic prophecy—i.e., mysteries, <sup>69See</sup> discussion on prophetic apocalyptic implications of "mystery" in Daniel, 1 Corinthians, and Revelation in Beale, 29-46, 109-146, 260-287 wisdom, revelation, and knowledge (as found in the books of Daniel and Revelation). 70Mysteries (Dan. 2:18, 19, 27-30, 46; Rev. 1:20; 10:7; 17:5; 17:7); wisdom (Dan. 2:20, 21, 23, 30; 5:11; Rev. 13:18; 17:9); knowledge/understanding (Dan. 2:21, 30; 5:12, 23; 8:15-17; 9:23; 10:11; 11:23; 12:10; Rev. 13:18); revelation/show (Dan. 2:22, 28-30, 47; 10:1; Rev. 1:1; 4:1; 17:1; 21:9; 22:6, 8). While these themes in biblical apocalyptic literature may be similar to that of 1 Corinthians, Hebrew and Greek vocabulary vary as well as the overall context. Prophecy thus relates to large themes of salvation and the sovereign purpose of God in salvation history. GOP 178.2

Prophecy was "an especially widespread phenomenon in the religions of antiquity" <sup>71</sup>Beale, 29-46, 109-146, 260-287. See D. E. Aune, Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 23-88. and often ecstatic. <sup>72</sup>New Testament prophets did not have ecstatic experiences while prophesying, but were in full self-control with very understandable speech (1 Cor. 14:24, 25, 30, 32). See Fee,

The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 595. By contrast, Paul's understanding of it—as well as that of other New Testament writers—was thoroughly conditioned by the biblical prophetic tradition. <sup>73Grudem, 103-108</sup>; Talbert, 114. Thus New Testament prophets were connected with Old Testament prophets. Prophecy's content and focus had moral purpose in relation to the work of God in the person and work of Jesus. <sup>741</sup> Cor. 12:3, 5-7; cf. 1 Cor. 1:18-2:16. It touched on matters of worldview, Christian identity, the inner self, and the application of gospel truth in relation to personal and community life and service. 751 Cor. 12:12, 13, 27; 14:3, 24, 25; cf. 1 Cor. 4:4, 5; Eph. 3:3-6; 4:13-16 GOP

While a "live" revelatory phenomenon, the prophecy that Paul describes in 1 Corinthians was neither casual nor mundane. Nor was it impulsive, unrestrained, self-engendered, individualistic, or subjective. <sup>761</sup> Cor. <sup>14:3, 24, 25, 29-33, 37, 38</sup>. It was not a different kind of prophecy, as some would suggest—prompted by a revelation from God, but having only the authority of mere human words in which it was spoken (i.e., the report of something God brings to mind). <sup>77This</sup> is the incorrect position, Grudem asserts. See Fee, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 595; Robeck, 755. *GOP 179.2* 

Thus, New Testament prophets spoke for God and their word or message was considered authoritative, even though people did not always perceive their full meaning. <sup>781</sup> Cor. 13:9-12; cf. 2 Peter 3:15, 16; 1 Peter 1:10, 11. Any newness of New Testament prophecy was in making known the deeper meaning of the earlier prophetic writings 79Cor. 12:8; 13:2; 14:6; cf. 1 Cor. 2:1, 7, 10; 4:1. New Testament prophets focused even more on Jesus, His life, His words, and His acts than the OT prophets had focused on the Messiah. See Dictionary of Fundamental Theology, s.v. "Prophecy." and, as an eschatological reality, that the gift was potentially available to more believers in proportion to those of the past. <sup>80Acts</sup> 2:14-36; 1 Cor. 1:6, 7; 12:7-10, 27, 31; Eph. 4:11-16. *GOP* 179.3

#### **Limitations of Prophecy**

In spite of its significance and unequivocal connection with Old Testament prophetic tradition, Paul was equally clear that prophecy had its limitations: <sup>81Robeck, 755</sup>. GOP 179.4

Where there are prophecies, they will cease; . . . we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears . . . Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known (1 Cor. 13:8-12, NIV [1984]). GOP 179.5

The knowledge that prophecy produces is at best partial information —a poor reflection in a mirror of the inexhaustible treasures of divine realities, both now and future. It presents an enigma/riddle (ainiamati) 82The phrase occurs only here and in the LXX, Numbers 12:6-8: "Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, I, the Lord, shall make Myself known to him in a vision. I shall speak with him in a dream. Not so, with My servant Moses, he is faithful in all My household; with him I speak mouth to mouth, even openly, and not in dark sayings [dia ainigmaton], and he beholds the form of the Lord. Why then were you not afraid to speak against My servant, against Moses?" This enigmatic indirectness compares to the limitations imposed by seeing God reflected through a mirror on the one hand with seeing God directly and clearly on the other—"face to face " 83" 'Face to face,' 'mouth to mouth,' and 'eye to eye' are OT idioms (see Gen. 32:30; Ex. 33:11; Num. 14:14; Deut. 5:4; 34:10; Judges 6:22; Isa. 52:8; Eze. 20:35) that imply that something comes directly, not through an intermediary or medium, such as a vision or dream" (The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, ed. Francis D. Nichol, vol. 6 [Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald®, 1980], 784, 785). Through prophecy one does not see the thing itself but only its mirror image through an intermediary. There is often the need of a new orientation in order for prophecy to be fully grasped—as per Jesus explaining prophecies of the Messiah following His death and resurrection to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:25, 44, 45). For this reason prophets didn't always know themselves what was intended in their prophecies. 841 Peter 1:10, 11; cf. Dan. 8:27. Nor could prophets fully grasp the meaning of another prophet's sayings. 85Dan. 9:1-19; cf. 2 Peter 3:14-16. This partial enigmatic indirectness, however, in no way undermined

either the prophecy's truthfulness or the Holy Spirit's integrity as the "Spirit of truth". <sup>86</sup>John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13; cf. 1 Cor. 2:10-13; 12:3, 10; 2 Peter 1:19-21. It was still in fact "a lamp shining in a dark place" (2 Peter 1:19).GOP 180.1

Furthermore, prophecy requires evaluation and by implication, sifting (reception/rejection): "Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others pass judgment" (1 Cor. 14:29). The word translated "pass judgment" is diakrinetosan, which means to evaluate, judge, make a distinction between. While the verb has a wide range of meaning in Paul's writings, <sup>87Cf. 1</sup> Cor. 4:7; 6:5; 11:29, 31. See David E. Garland, 1 Corinthians, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 625. in the immediate context, diakrino connotes making a distinction between prophetic wordsand by implication, between prophets. Using the same terminology, Paul earlier links the prophetic gift with the Holy Spirit-empowered gift of the discernment of prophecies: "He [the Spirit] gives one . . . the ability to prophesy. He gives someone else the ability to discern whether a message is from the Spirit of God or from another spirit" (1 Cor. 12:10, NLT). 88diakriseis pneumatōn—"the distinguishing of spirits." This discerning of the spirits is coupled to prophecy as its auxiliary, 89Discernment brings out the mutual interdependence of the gifts (Garland, 662). since prophecy needs checks. <sup>90Deut.</sup> 13:1-3; 1 Kings 22:19-28; Jer. 28:1-17; Matt. 24:24; 1 Thess. 5:20, 21; 2 Thess. 2:1, 2; 1 Tim. 4:1; 2 Peter 2:1, 2; 1 John 4:1. J.D.G. Dunn, The Theology of Paul the Apostle (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 556. In another context where the value of the prophetic gift itself was either overly questioned or unappreciated altogether, Paul urges thoughtful evaluation: "Do not guench the Spirit; do not despise prophetic utterances. But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good" (1 Thess. 5:19-21). 91Here Paul uses a stronger word, dokimazete—to learn the genuineness of something by examination and testing. GOP 180.2

If our analysis of prophecy in 1 Corinthians 12-14 is accurate, then the evaluation, which Paul calls for, concerns the discerning of true prophecy from false and by implication, true prophets from false. From what source would a purported prophetic manifestation come—the Holy Spirit, the human spirit (i.e., self-initiated), or an evil

spirit? 92Garland, 583. While there is no explicit warning of false prophets in Paul's otherwise positive exposition of the prophetic gift. false prophets were nevertheless part of the first century spiritual landscape and very much tacit in his directive for evaluation. 93Matt. 7:15; 24:11, 24; 2 Peter 2:1; 1 John 4:1; Acts 20:29, 30; 2 Cor. 11:13, 26; cf. 1 Cor. 12:10; 1 Thess. 5:19-21. Evil spirits were at work in the New Testament congregations. 941 Cor. 12:3, 10; cf. 1 John 4:1-3, 6; 2:18, 19. David Prior, The Message of 1 Corinthians, The Bible Speaks Today (Downers Grove, III.: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 208. The evaluation Paul envisioned was clearly between the true and false prophetic gift and not a different sort of evaluation of a different kind of prophecy. There was no Corinthian phenomenon of ordinary congregational prophecy where "each prophecy might have both true and false elements in it, and those would be sifted and evaluated for what they were" or where prophecy was "speaking merely human words to report something God brings to mind." 95Trying to mediate between cessationist and charismatic views of prophecy, Grudem unconvincingly argues for "a middle ground" or "third position" in which he differentiates New Testament prophecy from the Old Testament and allows for an "ordinary congregational prophecy," which was not equal in authority to that of Old Testament prophets but was simply a very human—and sometimes partially mistaken—report of something the Holy Spirit brought to someone's mind. The distinction Grudem incorrectly makes between: (1) true prophets who produced Scripture and those who did not: (2) true prophets who speak the very words of God and those who do not, and (3) prophets who were also apostles and those who were not, unwittingly blurs the larger biblical perspective of Holy Spirit-inspired revelation. See F. W. Grosheide, Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 337. GOP 181.1

This conclusion is further nuanced by the organic connection between prophecy and revelation (*1 Cor. 14:6*). Holy Spirit engendered revelation precedes prophesying, and yet revelation is given utterance through the medium of prophecy. <sup>96Grudem, 17-112</sup>. They are inseparable: simultaneous, yet sequential. Prophecy is based on receiving a revelation. <sup>97Grosheide, 338</sup>. A prophet may not always have a revelation for every moment and occasion, but is ever dependent on the moving of the Holy Spirit. <sup>98This may be implied</sup>

in 1 Corinthians 14:30: "But if a revelation is made to another who is seated, the first one must keep silent." Authentic Spirit-engendered prophecy does not reflect human initiative or resource. 99See 1 Peter 2:20, 21. Unlike the gift of tongues, which apparently was a "once-in-a-lifetime" endowment and evidently could be used at will. 1001 Cor. 14:13, 14, 27, 28. Referring to Pentecost, Ellen White asserts: "From this time forth the language of the disciples was pure, simple, and accurate, whether they spoke in their native tongue or in a foreign language" (The Acts of the Apostles [Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press®, 1911], 39). prophets did not in the same way own the Spirit of prophecy in the sense of expecting to reproduce it at will. 101See Garland, 662. They were ever dependent on Holy Spirit revelation. As noted above, such revelation, while partial and often enigmatic, would in no way undermine either the prophecy's complete truthfulness or the Holy Spirit's integrity as the "Spirit of truth " 102John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13; cf. 1 Cor. 2:10-13; 12:3, 10; 2 Peter 1:19-21. GOP 181.2

Again, there is no ordinary congregational prophecy envisioned here—where each prophecy might have both true and false elements in it or where the prophet merely shared in human terms something God had brought to mind. If the Holy Spirit was in fact facilitating the revelation, then the prophecy would be authentic (1 Cor. 12:11). But even if a given prophecy were authentic, it still needed evaluation—not because it communicated anything wrong, but because the presence of false prophets was ever a reality. GOP 182.1

As already noted, false prophets were part of contemporary culture and would come into the church as well. In the Corinthian community there evidently were some "who prided themselves on being prophets" (1 Cor. 14:37). <sup>103Garland, 662</sup>. This did not in any way mean that they were genuine prophets. The context seems to imply that these would-be prophets spoke on their own initiative and selfish motives rather than through genuine Holy Spirit revelation. The possibility of a congregation plagued by the commotion of competing prophets vying for attention and dominated by conceited members who refuse to listen to what others have been saying would not testify to genuine prophetic phenomenon, let alone the

While authoritative, genuine New Testament prophets nevertheless would ever have an objective point of reference beyond the local congregation that would clarify both their authenticity and authority, i.e., Old Testament Scripture and apostolic writings: "Was it from you that the word of God first went forth? Or has it come to you only? If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment. But if anyone does not recognize this, he is not recognized" (verses 36-38). GOP 182.3

Two things come into view here. First, New Testament prophets serve in the context of their own place in the history of "the word of God"—the gospel of Christ. \$105\text{Garland}\$, 662. Both the Hebrew Scriptures and the extant apostolic unfolding of the mystery of the gospel prophesied therein provide an objective biblical and revelatory point of reference. \$106\text{Col. 1:25-27; Eph. 3:2-10; Rom. 3:2; 15:4; 16:26; 1 Cor. 15:3, 4; Heb. 5:12-6:2; 1 Tim. 3:16, 17. There is a larger and prior revelatory oversight of historical authority and internal completeness against which inspired and revealed data is qualified and tested. The earlier tests the later. The hermeneutical horizon belongs exclusively to the biblical canon. \$GOP 182.4\$

Second, in some respect the prophets, at least at Corinth, served in the context of some kind of apostolic oversight. Did Paul anticipate this when he asserted that God has placed in the church *first* apostles, *second* prophets (*1 Cor. 12:28*)? Was there some kind of contemporaneous answerability between apostles and prophets—not in terms of one being more important than the other, or one being more authoritative than the other, but that one [apostles] had some kind of leadership precedence over the other [prophets] in the founding and building up of the church and in affirming the biblical point of reference (which they themselves provided in their own writings) for evaluating the veracity and authority of the other [prophets]? <sup>107See Fee, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 710. The text is not clear. However, we know that even genuine prophets were to be evaluated. We know too that Paul challenged Corinth's prophets and asserted parameters regarding their place in worship. *GOP*</sup>

This engagement of fellow prophets by Paul in no way suggests differing kinds of prophecy with differing levels of authority. 108Both Grudem and Carson incorrectly argue for two kinds of prophecy in terms of authority and infallibility (ibid., 618-620, 711, 712). If the Holy Spirit did inspire both, then there would be no hierarchy or degree of inspiration and revelation. There might have been, though, a hierarchy of practical relevance, i.e., apostles and prophets building and supervising the larger church's missional movement, and prophets relating to more regional congregational nurture. 109As per Eph. 2:20; 3:5; 2 Peter 3:2; Rev. 18:20. If this diversity of roles did exist, it would not change the hermeneutical hierarchy of earlier revealed and inspired sources of the Hebrew Scriptures, to which the apostles themselves were accountable. Nor would it change how the apostles themselves eventually became part of those very determinative sources in terms of New Testament literature. That an apostle could challenge a fellow prophet may be the reason that, in his second letter to the Corinthians, Paul refers to "false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ" (2 Cor. 11:13; cf. Rev. 2:2). Being a prophet was not enough if Paul kept focus on the Lord's command (1 Cor. 14:37). Again, the text is not clear on such a possible limitation of prophecy. GOP 183.1

Finally, while the gift of prophecy is potentially available to all—because every believer receives the Holy Spirit <sup>110Acts</sup> <sup>2:17, 18, 38, 39; cf. 1 Cor. 14:1, 39.</sup>—only a few will actually be so used. This is the nature of spiritual gifts. Not all receive the gift of prophecy (1 Cor. 12:29). What is meant, then, by "you can all prophecy one by one"? " 1111 Cor. 14:31; cf. verses <sup>24, 25</sup>·All" here does not mean that everyone has this gift. Rather it refers either to (1) those who do have the gift and how they are to handle themselves in a community worship context (i.e., apostolic coworkers); or (2) a hypothetical situation in that Paul is simply showing how even if everyone were to have the gift—for which he invites all of them to earnestly seek <sup>112Cf. 1</sup> Cor. <sup>14:1, 39</sup>.— everything needs to be done in an orderly fashion and for the edification of the body. The fact that some erroneously thought they had the prophetic gift suggests that not everyone actually had it, including those who so thought they

might (1 Cor. 14:36-38).GOP 183.2

#### **Prophecy and the Eschatological Remnant**

Having reviewed what *1 Corinthians 14* teaches regarding the gift of "live" prophecy in the first-century church, Adventist readers will further wonder how such an interpretation of this passage contributes to their historic Adventist understandings of the gift of prophecy as an eschatological phenomenon in the remnant church. 113Rev. 12:17; 19:10; cf. Rev. 10:11; 22:6-9. It is not enough to clarify that the lively prophetic phenomenon that Paul describes was in keeping with the Old Testament prophetic gift. <sup>1141</sup> Cor. 14:3, 24, 25, 29-33, 37, 38. It is not enough to clarify that prophecy among Corinthian believers specifically was not a different kind of prophecy. Nor is it enough to clarify that the biblical view of prophecy and prophets does not allow differing levels of prophetic inspiration and authority. *GOP 183.3* 

There remains, though, the question of how the continuation of this gift of prophecy in the church might be envisioned. Would the prophetic gift occur only in the first-century context of the foundation of the church in association with the apostles, or would it be valid through the entire church age? In particular, would the continuation of the prophetic gift operate on a large paradigmatic and interpretive level of communicating to the needs of the end-time people of God? GOP 184.1

While Paul does not specifically address these questions in his first epistle to the Corinthians, there are several observations that contemporary Adventist readers might consider. First, by their very nature the phenomenon of spiritual gifts would remain viable up to Christ's return: "You do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed" (1 Cor. 1:7, NIV). 115Cf. 1 Cor. 12-14; Eph. 4:11-13. This includes speech and knowledge-related gifts (verse 5), both of which prophecy exemplified. Additionally, Paul asserts that prophecy will cease when Christ returns, suggesting that prophecy will last among believers—potentially at least—through the entire church age until that time (1 Cor. 13:8-13). 116See Fee, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 695. Prophecy is one of the "manifestations of the Spirit for the church's present eschatological existence, in which God's new people live 'between the times'—between the inauguration of

the End through the death and resurrection of Jesus, with the subsequent outpouring of the Spirit and the final consummation when God will be 'all in all' (see 15:20-28)" (Grudem, 193-216). Prophecy was not restricted to or limited to the apostles or time. Nor would its continuation threaten the sufficiency of Scripture of the closed canon. 117lbid., 643. This phenomenon is observed in John's Apocalypse where God's eschatological remnant is characterized as having "the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Rev. 12:17), which is defined as "the spirit of prophecy" (Rev. 19:10). Consistent with Pauline experience, Revelation portrays a "brotherhood of prophets," which implies the historical continuity of Spirit-engendered revelation down to the eschaton 118Rev. 10:7; 16:6; 18:24; cf. Rev. 19:10; 22:6, 9. The book of Revelation mentions prophets in contexts that imply their existence through Christian history (Rev. 10:7; 11:10, 18; 16:6; 18:20, 24; 22:6, 9). See Ellis, 13-17, 23. As an apostle one could also function as a prophet—as per Paul (1 Cor. 14:6: Gal. 1:11, 12; 1 Tim. 1:18; 4:14; cf. Acts 16:9, 10; Eph. 3:5) and John (Rev. 1:1, 11, 19). GOP 184.2

Second, prophecy is a community phenomenon. The metaphorical portraval of the church as the body of Christ in conjunction with spiritual gifts includes prophecy. Additionally, it locates the body as the locus in which the gift of prophecy is most richly manifested. 1191 Cor. 12:7-31; cf. Rom. 12:3-8; Eph. 4:7-16. C. H. Peisker and C. Brown, "Prophet," in New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986), 88. This community context, however, is not to be viewed as mere local, congregational, or worship-focused. 120While Paul's most explicit and developed discussion of prophecy may take place in the context of the local Corinthian worshipping community, it is clear that his focus concerns the nature of prophecy in relation to all the churches more than that of prophecy in local congregational worship itself (1 Cor. 14:33, 36, 37; cf. 1 Cor. 1:2; 7:17; 2 Cor. 8:18; 11:28). The local situation provides the context for projecting a larger picture of the prophetic phenomenon in the first-century church. First-century prophetic activity included associates of the apostles at large who were engaged in preaching, teaching, and foundational aspects of church organization. 121Eph. 3:4-6; cf. 1 Tim. 4:14; Acts 13:1-3; 15:32-34; Eph. 4:11, 12. These prophetic coworkers appear most vividly in association with the apostle Paul as per the book of Acts and Pauline literature. See Robeck. These associates were charismatically endowed persons who, by virtue of their prophetic gift, exerted

significant leadership and mentoring authority through authoritative exposition and application of Scripture. <sup>122Rom.</sup> <sup>12:6</sup>; <sup>1</sup> Cor. <sup>12:10</sup>, <sup>28</sup>; Eph. <sup>4:11</sup>, <sup>12</sup>. Similarly, the eschatological remnant comprises a global community locus in which the Spirit of prophecy is effectively manifested. <sup>123Rev.</sup> <sup>12:17</sup>; <sup>19:10</sup>; cf. Rev. <sup>10:11</sup>. The envisioned end-time phenomenon brings prophetic guidance, nurture, and authoritative biblical focus in the context of the everlasting gospel (*Rev.* 14:6). *GOP* 184.3

Third, the prophetic phenomenon envisioned in 1 Corinthians reflects worldview and cosmic conflict themes that are evident in apocalyptic prophecy-i.e., mysteries, wisdom, revelation, and knowledge (as found in the books of Daniel and Revelation). For Paul, prophecy's content and focus has moral purpose in relation to the work of God in the person and work of Jesus. 1241 Cor. 12:3, 5-7; cf. 1 Cor. 1:18-2:16 Prophecy touches worldview, Christian identity, the inner self, and the application of gospel truth in relation to personal and community life and service. 1251 Cor. 12:12, 13, 27; 14:3, 24, 25; cf. 1 Cor. 4:4, 5; Eph. 3:3-6; 4:13-16. Prophecy likewise includes Christ's paradoxical work on the cross, the resurrection, the eternal reign of God, apocalyptic wisdom, and many end-time realities and events. 126Beale, 125. These same Pauline realities are expressed in the prophetic apocalyptic context of Revelation's vision of the remnant (Rev. 12:17) where the "testimony of Jesus"/"spirit of prophecy" (Rev. 19:10) encompasses worldview proportion (and worldview transformation). 127Much has been and can be said about the meaning of the phrase "the testimony of Jesus" (ten marturian lesou), but at bottom it entails a prophetic apocalyptic worldview. The phrase occurs in Revelation 1:2, 9; 12:17; 19:10 (twice). In Revelation 20:4 there is reference to the believer's "testimony of Jesus," i.e., "their testimony of Jesus." See my discussion of prophetic apocalyptic worldview implications of the "testimony of Jesus" in relation to the "everlasting gospel" (Rev. 14:7) in Larry L. Lichtenwalter, "Worldview Transformation and Mission: Narrative, Theology, and Ritual in John's Apocalypse," Journal of the Adventist Theologial Society 21, no. 1-2 (2010): 217-220, especially 218, note 19. See also: Ángel Manuel Rodríguez, "The 'Testimony of Jesus' in the Writings of Ellen G. White." in Toward a Theology of the Remnant, ed. Ángel Manuel Rodríguez (Silver Spring, Md.: Biblical Research Institute, 2009), 227-243; Ellis, 3-44; Fee, The First Epistle to the Corinthians,

620, 621; Larry L. Lichtenwalter, Revelation's Great Love Story: More Than I Ever Imagined (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald®, 2008), 119-124. Through the "testimony of Jesus," the prophetic gift facilitates remnant identity and mission with a Christocentric worldview and message (Rev. 12:17; 14:6-13; cf. Rev. 10:11). It ever relates to inner life and character and brings application of the eternal gospel to personal and communal life. 128Rev. 12:17; 14:1-13. Its content and center is the witness of Jesus. 129Rodríguez, 228, 229, 232-235, 242. It unfolds the theodicy of God's handling of the reality of evil in the person and work of Jesus within the cosmic conflict. 130Richard Bauckham, The Theology of the Book of Revelation, ed. James D. G. Dunn, New Testament Theology (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 119. It encompasses the "eternal gospel" (Rev. 14:6). 131Sigve K. Tonstad, Saving God's Reputation: The Theological Function of Pistis Iesou in the Cosmic Narratives of Revelation (New York: T. & T. Clark International, 2006), xv, xvi, <sup>159-193.</sup> The "testimony of Jesus"/"spirit of prophecy" link (Rev. 19:10) places both the "testimony of Jesus" and the "eternal gospel" within the urgency of a compelling apocalyptic prophetic context. 132Bauckham, 119. Thus the "spirit of prophecy" (verse 10) provides a broad foundational, interpretive, and formative worldview role for God's end-time people on a level consistent to that of first-century prophets. This is consistent with the Pauline perspectives of prophecy, which we have seen in 1 Corinthians. GOP 185.1

Fourth, prophecy as a community phenomenon is an unmistakable sign or indication of God's presence and blessing within that community (1 Cor. 14:22). <sup>133L</sup>ichtenwalter, "Worldview Transformation and Mission: Narrative, Theology, and Ritual in John's Apocalypse," <sup>214</sup>, note 19. See Grudem, <sup>153</sup>. Existing prophetic activity shows that God is actively present—something even an outsider who visits will be able to recognize (verses 24, 25). Similarly, the existence of prophecy is not an abstract identifying mark of the eschatological remnant. Its presence projects a vivid sense of God's personal presence, Holy Spirit revelatory guidance, and truth-empowering blessings within the cosmic conflict narrative. <sup>134Rev. 12:1-17; 14:1-13; 19:10; cf. Rev. 10:11.</sup> This is as critical to the church's end-time identity, message, and mission as it was to that of the first-century church. <sup>1351 Cor. 1:7</sup>;

Finally, every first-century prophet was under the ultimate authority of biblical prophetic tradition. <sup>1361</sup> Cor. 14:37, 38; cf. 1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 2:20: 3:5: 2 Peter 3:2: Rev. 18:20: cf. Isa. 8:20: 1 Thess. 5:19-21. See discussion. Fee, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 679-688. Both the Old Testament Scriptures and subsequent apostolic unfolding of the mystery of the gospel prophesied therein provide an objective biblical and revelatory point of reference (Col.1:25-27; Eph. 3:2-10; Rom. 3:2; 15:4; 16:26; 1 Cor. 15:3, 4; Heb. 5:12-6:2; 1 Tim. 3:16, 17). There was no independent prophetic authority in the first-century church—unless, of course, it was false. 137The Old Testament prophets and later the writings of the apostles held historical precedence over other prophets in the founding and building up of the church as well as in providing the biblical point of reference for all prophetic veracity and authority. Nor was there a prophetic hierarchy in terms of the degree of inspiration and revelation on the one hand or prophetic authority on the other. 138The presence of other prophets neither threatened the finality of the canon nor gave any room for differing kinds of prophecy with differing levels of authority. Both Grudem and Carson incorrectly argue for two kinds of prophecy in terms of authority and infallibility (Fee, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 618-620, 711, 712). While some suggest that by the end of the first century the prophets superseded the apostles. 139Grudem incorrectly asserts, "In Rev. prophets appear to have superseded apostles. In the three passages where the latter are mentioned Rev. 2:2 refers to false apostles. and Rev. 18:20 and 21:14 refer to the apostolic Twelve who are the counterpart of the OT prophets. On the other hand, prophets are mentioned in Revelation 10:7; 11:10, 18; 16:6; 18:20, 24; 22:6, 9. The author regards himself as a prophet (Rev. 22:9). He has received from the exalted Lord a revelation of the meaning of the events of history (Rev. 1:1)" (Grudem, 47-49). Revelation clearly places the "spirit of prophecy" within a larger historic prophetic/apostolic tradition, which provides an overarching historical, theological, and ethical backdrop for its ["the spirit of prophecy's"] existence, veracity, and authority. 140Rev. 19:10; 22:6-10; cf. Rev. 10:11; 12:1-17; 18:20; 21:14. Revelation's pervasive allusions to Jeremiah, Daniel, Ezekiel, Isaiah, etc., undergird its biblical prophetic orientation and place the end-time prophetic gift in a historic spectrum in anticipation of the final consummation. In so doing, Scripture's last book affirms the "spirit of prophecy" in a broad foundational, interpretive, and formative role for God's endtime people on a level consistent to that of first-century prophets, as evidenced in Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians. The biblical witness of the phenomenon of prophecy in 1 Corinthians 12-14 and the book of Revelation are consistent.  $GOP\ 186.2$ 

#### Conclusion

The numerous New Testament references to prophets and prophecy reveal a lively prophetic phenomenon in the church's missionary and nurture enterprise. 141Acts 2:17, 18; 11:27, 28; 13:1-3; 15:32; 19:6; 21:4, 9-11; Rom. 12:4-6; 1 Cor. 11:4, 5; 12:10, 28, 29; 13:2, 8, 9; 14:1, 3-6, 22, 24, 26, 29, 31, 32, 37, 39; Eph. 3:5; 4:11; 1 Thess. 5:20; 1 Tim. 1:18; 4:14; Rev. 1:3; 10:11; 11:6, 10, 18; 16:6; 18:20, 24; 19:10; 22:6, 7, 9, 18, 19. 142. Eph. 3:4-6; This prophetic activity was expressed largely in the context of ecclesiology and coworkers of the apostles, who were engaged in foundational preaching, teaching, and church organization. 142Eph. 3:4-6; cf. 1 Tim. 4:14; Acts 13:1-3; 15:32-34; Eph. 4:11, 12. GOP 187.1

Prophecy is the most mentioned of all the Holy Spirit's spiritual gifts described within the writings of Paul, implying the widest range of occurrence in the Pauline churches. This is especially so in 1 Corinthians 12-14, where a sustained corrective discussion of an apparent unbridled use of tongues in the Corinthian church takes place. Here Paul affirms the priority of prophecy over uninterpreted tongues (1 Cor. 14:5) for the reason that, as a speech gift, prophecy by nature edified, encouraged, and consoled (verse 3). Because prophecy itself was not a problem at Corinth, Paul used it as an effective example of the edification purpose of speech-related gifts. Believers are to pursue prophecy as the better way: although interpreted tongues are not to be discouraged (verses 1, 39). However, not all will actually receive the gift of prophecy (1 Cor. 12:29). GOP 187.2

First Corinthians 12-14 provides a comprehensive overview of the prophetic phenomenon— prophets, prophesy, and prophesying—where the activity of prophesying seems to predominate over the gift itself. The "live" revelatory experience of prophecy is a community phenomenon, 1431 Cor. 12:7-31; cf. Rom. 12:3-8; Eph. 4:7-16. and serves as an unmistakable sign of God's presence and blessings (1 Cor. 14:22). The existential penetration and moral renewal, which prophecy brings to its hearers, accentuates the true nature of Spirit-engendered prophecy in the church. 1441 Cor. 14:25; cf. 1 Cor. 4:4, 5; Heb. 4:12, 13. The special and deeply rooted

association of the Holy Spirit with prophecy indicates that the prophetic activity Paul has in view is clearly informed by the nature of prophecy as expressed by the true prophets of Israel. The word cluster of prophecy together with the Holy Spirit, revelation, knowledge, mysteries, and teaching reflects themes evident in apocalyptic prophecy where worldview, salvation, and the sovereign purposes of God in salvation history are foremost. <sup>1451</sup> Cor. 2:1, 7; 4:1; cf. Acts 2:16-36; Rom. 16:25; Eph.1:9; 3:3, 9; 6:19; Col. 1:26, 27; Rev. 10:7; <sup>1</sup> Peter 1:10, 11. Thus the prophecy, which Paul describes in 1 Corinthians, is not a new or different kind of prophetic gift. Nor does it suggest any different degree or authority of prophecy from that of the Old Testament. *GOP 187.3* 

In spite of its significance and unequivocal connection with Old Testament prophetic tradition, prophecy had its limitations (*1 Cor. 13:8-12*). As a manifestation of the church's present eschatological existence "between the times," prophecy by nature is both temporal and partial. And because false prophets were part of the first-century spiritual landscape, <sup>146Matt. 7:15; 24:11, 24; 2 Peter 2:1; 1 John 4:1; Acts 20:29, 30; 2 Cor. 11:13, 26. prophecy required evaluation of prophetic words and, by implication, sifting between the true and false prophetic gift (and prophets). This was not a different sort of evaluation of a different kind of prophecy. There was no unique Corinthian phenomenon of ordinary congregational prophecy. <sup>1471</sup> Cor. 12:10; 14:29, 37; cf. 1 Thess. 5:20, 21; 1 John 4:1-3. GOP 188 1</sup>

The close connection between *revelation* and *prophecy* (1 Cor. 14:6) assures both the prophecy's complete truthfulness and the Holy Spirit as the "Spirit of truth." 1481 Cor. 2:10-13; 12:3, 10; cf. John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13; 2 Peter 1:19-21. While prophets served in the context of earlier biblical prophetic oversight, there was no hierarchy or degrees of inspiration and revelation, nor were there differing levels of prophetic authority. Paul's explanation of prophecy in the context of his sustained corrective discussion of an abuse of uninterpreted tongues (1 Cor. 12-14) includes rhetoric that seems to imply that prophesying itself was not a problem in Corinth at all—only the possibility of false prophecy. GOP 188.2

Adventist understanding of the gift of prophecy as an eschatological

phenomenon in the remnant church <sup>149</sup>Rev. 12:17; 19:10; cf. Rev. 10:11; <sup>22:6-9</sup> resonates with several key Pauline assertions regarding prophecy in 1 Corinthians 14. First, the prophetic gift would remain viable up to Christ's return. <sup>1501</sup> Cor. 1:7; 13:8-13. This in no way would threaten the sufficiency of Scripture of the closed canon. *GOP* 188.3

Second, prophecy is a community phenomenon that is not to be viewed as merely local, congregational, or worship-focused. <sup>1511</sup> Cor. 12:7-31; Rom. 12:3-8; Eph. 4:7-16. Noncanonical prophets exerted significant spiritual/moral influence in foundational aspects of building up the church at large. *GOP 188.4* 

Third, the genuine prophecy, which Paul describes in 1 Corinthians, reflects worldview and cosmic conflict themes that are evident in apocalyptic prophecy. <sup>1521</sup> Cor. 12:3, 5-7; 1:18-2:16; 12:12, 13, 27; 14:3, 24, 25; Eph. 3:3-6; 4:13-16. GOP 188.5

Fourth, the presence of prophecy within the church is an unmistakable sign or indication of God's presence and blessing within a given believing community (1 Cor. 14:22, 24, 25). This is critical to the church's identity, message, and mission—both in the first century and in earth's final generation. GOP 189.1

Finally, every prophet is under biblical precedence and oversight, which provides the overarching historical, theological, and ethical backdrop for any prophet's authenticity, veracity, and authority (verses 37, 38). There is no independent prophetic authority. Nor is there any hierarchy or degrees of inspiration, revelation or authority. *GOP 189.2* 

As prophecy functions to "disclose the secrets of the human heart, to produce conviction of sin, and to lead to a vindication both of God and of the Christian community," <sup>153Brown, 88.</sup> 1 Cor. <sup>14:24, 25; cf. John 16:7-11.</sup> it remains an incredible spiritual gift that edifies, exhorts, and brings both comfort and hope (verse 3). It reflects the church's present eschatological existence—"between the times." It will not cease until our Savior returns. *GOP 189.3* 

# Chapter 9 - The "Spirit of Prophecy" in the Revelation of John

#### Ranko Stefanovic

Revelation 12:17 identifies the end-time faithful remnant as those who "keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus." The second of these identifying marks is restated in Revelation 19:10, which portrays John the revelator as prostrating himself before the feet of the interpreting angel to worship him. However, the angel immediately warned him: "Do not do that; I am a fellow servant of you and your brothers who have the testimony of Jesus; worship God!" 1My translation; in the rest of the chapter, if not stated otherwise, all Scripture quotations are from the New American Standard Bible. The angel further explained that "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." 2Some scholars argue that this explanatory clause was supplied by John as his comment to the angel's statement (as, for instance, found in the Revised Standard Version). The contextual evidence shows, however, that the interpreting angel stated this explanation. GOP 190.1

Expositors throughout history have struggled with these two expressions, but no consensus has been reached regarding their meaning. The purpose of this study is to determine the meaning of the expressions "the testimony of Jesus" and "the spirit of prophecy" in relation to each other and their significance for an understanding of the meaning and function of prophets and prophecy in Revelation. *GOP* 190.2

# "The Testimony of Jesus"

Since the expressions "the testimony of Jesus" and "the spirit of prophecy" are equated in the book, it appears that a clue to an understanding of the latter is found in the former. The difficulty with the phrase "the testimony of Jesus" (he marturia Iesou) is that it may be interpreted as a subjective or an objective genitive. The former would refer to the testimony borne by Jesus (i.e., His testimony) during His life on earth and later through Christian prophets, while the latter refers to the believers bearing witness about or regarding Jesus. 3G. K. Beale argues that "a subjective genitive connotes the idea that all true prophecy has its origin in the words and acts of Jesus; an objective genitive conveys the notion that all true prophecy manifests itself in testimony to Jesus". By way of illustration, while the (The Book Revelation, New International Greek Testament The Eerdmans. 19991. 947). New Commentary [Grand Rapids: International Version translates the phrase of Revelation 12:17 subjectively as "[they] hold firmly to what Jesus has said," the editors of Today's New International Version have changed its meaning, and translate it objectively: "[those who] hold fast their testimony about Jesus." So also the Revised Standard Version. which translates the verse as "[who] bear witness to Jesus." The latter represents many commentators' understanding of the book of Revelation. 4For the arguments in favor of the objective genitive, see David E. Aune, Revelation 17-22, Word Biblical Commentary 52c (Waco, Tex.: Thomas Nelson, 1998), 1038; also Henry B. Swete, The Apocalypse of St. John (New York: Macmillan, 1906), 249. Most commentators hold, however, that both the subjective and objective meanings are in view: "the testimony of Jesus" refers to the testimony Jesus bore, but the church also bears witness to Him; see Beale. 679, 947; also Isbon T. Beckwith, The Apocalypse of John, reprint (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1967), 161, 729; George A. Ladd, A Commentary on the Revelation of John (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), 251; J. Massyngberde Ford, Revelation, The Anchor Bible 38 (New York: Anchor Bible, 1975), 312; Leon Morris, The Book of Revelation, 2nd ed., Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 222; M. Eugene Boring, Revelation, Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching (Louisville, Kv.: John Knox Press, 1989), 194; John P. M. Sweet, Revelation, TPI New Testament Commentaries (Philadelphia: Trinity Press, 1990), 205; Grant R. Osborne, Revelation, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament

(Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 677; Stephen S. Smalley, The Revelation to John, A Commentary on the Greek Text of the Apocalypse (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 334, 487; Ian Boxall, The Revelation of Saint John, Black's New Testament Commentary (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2006), 270; Brian K. Blount, Revelation: A Commentary, The New Testament Library (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster, 2009), 348. This would make all the believers in the church prophets who, inspired by the Spirit, bear their testimony concerning Jesus. *GOP* 190.3

The phrase "the testimony of Jesus" (he marturia Iesou) occurs six times in Revelation (1:2, 9; 12:17; 19:10; 20:4). <sup>5A similar construction</sup> occurs also in 1 Corinthians 1:6 (to marturion tou Christou, "the testimony of Christ") and 2 Timothy 1:8 (to marturion tou kuriou hēmōn, "the testimony of our Lord"). While in Revelation 1:9 and 20:4 the expression could be understood as the objective genitive <sup>6Gerhard</sup> Pfandl sees the possibility that "of Jesus" in Revelation 1:9 and 20:4 might also be taken as a subjective genitive, although he allows for the reading, "a testimony about Jesus" ("The Remnant Church and the Spirit of Prophecy," in Symposium on Revelation-Book 2, Daniel and Revelation Committee Series 7 [Silver Spring, Md.: Biblical Research Institute, 1992], 309, 310, 320, 321).—the testimony that John and the faithful Christians bore concerning Jesus— the contextual evidence strongly points to the subjective genitive of the phrase in Revelation 1:2, 12:17, and 19:10. This is the conclusion of many scholars 7See William Barclay, The Revelation of John, 2nd ed., Daily Study Bible (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960), 2:177; George B. Caird, The Revelation of St. John the Divine, Harper's New Testament Commentaries (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), 238; Beckwith, 630; Morris, 160; Robert H. Mounce, The Book of Revelation, New International Commentary on the New Testament, 2nd ed. [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977], 347; George R. Beasley-Murray, The Book of Revelation, 2nd ed., New Century Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981), 276; Sweet, 205; Richard Bauckham, The Climax of Prophecy (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1993), 161; Alan F. Johnson, Revelation, The Expositor's Bible Commentary, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006), 13:756. Such an assertion is supported by several arguments: GOP 191.1

1. In the Johannine writings the object of witnessing is regularly conveyed by the preposition peri ("about, concerning, with reference to, of") as may be seen from the following text: *dioti ou* 

paradexontai sou marturian peri emou ("because they will not accept your testimony about Me"). 8Cf. John 1:7, 8, 15; 2:25; 5:31, 32, 36, 37, 39; 8:14; 1 John 5:9, 10. On the other hand, the subjective idea is regularly expressed by the syntactic combination of the noun "testimony" (*marturia*) with a genitive noun or ("testimony/witness of . . ."). First John 5:9 may be taken as an example: "If we receive the testimony of men [ten marturian ton anthropon], the testimony of God [he marturia tou theou] is greater; for the testimony of God [he marturia tou theou] is this, that He has testified concerning His Son [hoti memartureken peri tou huiou autou]." This is also the case in all other texts in the Johannine writings in which the construction, "the testimony of . . ." occurs. 9Cf. hē marturia tou Iōanou ("the testimony of John"; John 1:19); tēn marturian ēmōn ("our testimony"; John 3:11; 3 John 12); hē marturia mou ("my testimony"; John 5:31, 32; 8:14); ten marturian autou ("his testimony"; John 3:22-33; 19:35; 21:24); hē marturia sou ("your testimony"; John 8:13; 19:35; 21:24; cf. Acts 22:18); duo anthropon he marturia ("the testimony of two men"; John 8:17); ten marturina ton anthropon ("the testimony of men"; 1 John 5:9); ten marturian auton ("their testimony"; Rev. 11:7; 12:11). This leads to the conclusion that the phrase "the testimony of Jesus" (he marturia lesou) in Revelation 12:17 and 19:10 must be understood subjectively ("the testimony borne by Jesus"); the objective idea would be expressed with he marturia peri lesoul ("the testimony about/regarding Jesus"). GOP 191.2

2. In both *Revelation 12:17* and *19:10* the end-time saints are identified as the ones "who have [echonton] the testimony of Jesus"—not as those "who hold the testimony of Jesus" as translators have commonly (incorrectly) translated. The use of the verb "have" (*echo*) with the phrase "the testimony of Jesus" (*ten marturian Iesou*) points to the subjective meaning of the genitive noun: the end-time saints are in possession of "the testimony of Jesus." The force of this verb joined with "the testimony of Jesus" is generally overlooked by expositors that opt for the objective genitive, which causes the phrase to mean "they bear the testimony." 10David Hill, "Prophecy and Prophets in Revelation," New Testament Studies 18 (1971): 411; Pfandl, 315. *GOP 192.1* 

While the verb echo in Greek has different shades of meaning, its

basic lexical meaning is "possession." 11See Walter Bauer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature. 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 420. This is the predominant meaning of the word in the New Testament. 12E.g., "have authority" (Matt. 7:29; Mark 1:22); "have a reward" (Matt. 5:46); "have faith" (Matt. 17:20; Luke 17:6); "have power" (Mark 2:10; 3:15); "have treasure in heaven" (Mark 10:21); "have eternal life" (John 3:15); "have the light" (John 12:35); "have peace with God" (Rom. 5:1); "have a zeal of God" (Rom. 10:2); "have the mind of Christ" (1 Cor. 2:16): "have boldness" (Eph. 3:12): "have an advocate" (1 John 2:1); "have the keys" (Rev. 1:18); "have patience" (Rev. 2:3); "have a name" (Rev. 3:1); "have the seal" (Rev. 7:2); "have the trumpet" (Rev. 9:14); see also General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Problems in Bible Translation (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald®, 1954), 248. This is especially true when echo takes marturia as its object. To have a testimony refers to somebody else's rather than a person's own testimony, as in the case of Jesus' statement: "But the witness which I have . . . the very works that I do, bear witness of Me" [ego de echo ten marturian . . . ta erga ha poio marturei peri emou] (John 5:36). Also, in the words of Paul, an elder in the church must "have a good testimony from those outside" [dei de kai marturian kalen echein apo ton exothen] (1 Tim. 3:7). In these two cases the construction: "to have a testimony of . . ." is followed by the subjective genitive case. The objective idea of the believers bearing their witness concerning Jesus would be expressed with the verb witness") and the preposition *peri* martureo ("to concerning") rather than with the verb echo ("to have)." 13Problems in Bible Translation, 248. GOP 192 2

Both of these cases suggest that the expression "having the testimony of Jesus" (*echonton ten marturian Iesou*) in *Revelation 12:17* and 19:10 does not refer to the testimony that the end-time believers bear about Jesus. It rather denotes that the end-time believers are in possession of the testimony that Jesus Himself bore during His earthly life and ministry, which prophets who had the spirit of prophecy preached after His ascension. *GOP 193.1* 

# "The Spirit of Prophecy"

The subjective reading of the expression "the testimony of Jesus" is further affirmed in *Revelation 19:10*, where it is equated with "the spirit of prophecy" (he gar marturia lesou estin to pneuma tes propheteias). Two questions arise here. First, what is the meaning of the expression "the spirit of prophecy"? Second, why is "the testimony of Jesus" equated with the "spirit of prophecy"?*GOP* 193.2

The major difficulty with the expression "the spirit of prophecy" is that it occurs only here in *Revelation 19:10* and nowhere else in the New Testament. Another difficulty is that John the revelator does not explicitly explain it anywhere in the book. The obvious reason for this is that the first-century readers of Revelation were undoubtedly familiar with the expression and, therefore, had little difficulty understanding exactly what John meant by this phrase. *GOP 193.3* 

While it appears that the expression "the testimony of Jesus" was most likely coined by John, <sup>14</sup>Pfandl, <sup>311</sup>. the Jewish sources overwhelmingly show that the expression "the spirit of prophecy" was commonly used among the Jewish people at the time of the writing of the book of Revelation. As such, it exclusively referred to prophetic ministry. <sup>15</sup>See Problems in Bible Translation, <sup>256</sup>. *The Jewish Encyclopedia* explains that somewhere toward the end of the Second Temple period, the "Holy Spirit is at times identified with the spirit of prophecy." <sup>16</sup>The Jewish Encyclopedia, ed. Isidore Singer (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1907), 6:449a. This equation can be observed, first of all, in the frequent occurrence of this phrase in the *Targums*—the Aramaic paraphrastic translations of the Old Testament used in the synagogue. Here are a few examples: *GOP* 193.4

Targum Onqelos to Genesis 41:38—"Thereupon the Pharaoh said to his servants: 'Can we find a man like this in whom there is the spirit of prophecy from before the Lord" "17The Aramaic Bible: The Targums 6, trans. Bernard Grossfeld (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1988), 138. (so also Targum of Jonathan to Genesis 41:38). 18The Aramaic

Targum of Jonathan to Exodus 35:31 [regarding Bezael]—"... and fill him with a spirit of prophecy from before the Lord, with wisdom, with intelligence, with knowledge, and with every craft." <sup>19lbid., 263.</sup> Targum Ongelos to Numbers 11:25-29—"... the seventy elders; when the spirit of prophecy rested upon them, they began prophesying without ceasing. Now two men had remained behind in the camp..., yet the spirit of prophecy rested upon them though they were listed among the elders, but they had gone out of the Tent and prophesied in the camp.... Said Moses to him, 'Are you jealous for my sake? I wish that all the Lord's people be prophets in that the Lord would place the spirit of His prophecy' "20The Aramaic Bible 8, 102. (so also Targum of Jonathan to Numbers 11:25-29).GOP 193.6

Targum Ongelos to Numbers 27:18—"Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Take Joshua, son of Nun, a man who has within himself the spirit of prophecy, and lay your hand on him.' " <sup>21lbid., 145</sup>.GOP 194.1

Targum to 2 Chronicles 15:1—"The spirit of prophecy from before the Lord rested upon Azariah, the son of Oded." <sup>22The Aramaic Bible</sup> 19, trans. J. Stanley McIvor, 177. GOP 194.2

Targum to Isaiah 61:1—"The prophet said, 'A spirit of prophecy before the Lord God is upon me,...' " <sup>23The Aramaic Bible 11, trans.</sup> Bruce Chilton, <sup>118</sup>. The same in Targum to Ezekiel 11:5 and 41:38. <sup>24The Aramaic Bible 13, 40, and 102. GOP 194.3</sup>

Targum to Micah 3:7, 8—"And the false prophets shall be ashamed . . . because there is no spirit of prophecy from the Lord in them. But as for me, I am filled with the strength of the spirit of prophecy from the Lord." <sup>25The</sup> Aramaic Bible 14, trans. Kevin J. Cathcart and Robert P. Gordon, 118. GOP 194.4

These references are only representative; other similar texts may be added here. <sup>26E.g., Targum</sup> of Jonathan to Genesis 45:27 (The Aramaic Bible 1b, 148); Targum of Jonathan to Exodus 33:16 (The Aramaic Bible 2, 257);

35:21 (The Aramaic Bible 2, 262); 37:8 (The Aramaic Bible 2, 266); Targum Ongelos to Numbers 24:2 (The Aramaic Bible 8, 135); Targum Jonathan to Judges 2:10 (The Aramaic Bible 10, 63); Targum Jonathan to 1 Samuel 10:6, 10 (The Aramaic Bible 10, 119); Targum Jonathan to 2 Samuel 23:2 (The Aramaic Bible 10, 203); 19:20, 23 (The Aramaic Bible 10, 139); Targum Jonathan to 1 Kings 22:24, 10 (The Aramaic Bible 10, 261); Targum to First Chronicles 2:55 (The Aramaic Bible 19, 54); Targum to First Chronicles 18:22, 23 (The Aramaic Bible 19, 186); 20:14 (The Aramaic Bible 19, 191); 24:20 (The Aramaic Bible 19, 203); Targum to Psalm 14:1 (The Aramaic Bible 16, 44); 22:27 (The Aramaic Bible 16, 60); 45:3 (The Aramaic Bible 16, 96); 46:1 (The Aramaic Bible 16, 97); 49:16 (The Aramaic Bible 16, 103); 51:13, 14 (The Aramaic Bible 16, 107); 68:34 (The Aramaic Bible 19, 134); 77:3 (The Aramaic Bible 16, 149); 79:1 (The Aramaic Bible 11, 155); Targum to Ezekiel 11:24 (The Aramaic Bible 13, 42). They all show how the phrase the spirit of prophecy was commonly used in the synagogue before and after the time of John to refer to "the Spirit of Yahweh which comes upon this or that prophet." 27F. F. Bruce, The Time Is Fulfilled (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 105 Since it was believed that all the prophets spoke by the Holy Spirit, "the most characteristic sign of the presence of the Holy Spirit is the gift of prophecy, in the sense that the person upon whom it rests beholds the past and the future." 281bid. See, further, Hermann L. Strack and Paul Billerbeck, Kommentar zum Neuem Testament aus Talmud und Midrash. (Munchen: Beck, 1924), 129, 130. GOP 194 5

Later rabbis held a similar view. *The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia* explains: "In rabbinic literature, *Ruach Hakodesh* [Holy Spirit] is practically always the spirit of inspiration. The Spirit is referred to as the author of certain passages in the Bible, such as *Song of Songs* 8:5 or the passages in which God Himself is represented as speaking." <sup>29</sup>The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, ed. Isaac Landman (New York: The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, 1943), 9:268b. The rabbinical writings also show that rabbis widely believed that single biblical passages were "often considered as direct utterances of the Holy Spirit." <sup>30</sup>The Jewish Encyclopedia, 6:449; cf., Sifre Numbers 86; Tosefta Sotah 9.2; Sifre Deuteronomy 355. *GOP* 195.1

Although written in the post-New Testament period, it has been generally recognized that these sources reflect an earlier tradition,

much of which goes back to the first century. <sup>31See</sup> Hyam Maccoby, Early Rabbinic Writings, Cambridge Commentaries on Writings of the Jewish and Christian World 200 B.C. to A.D. 200 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 11-30; Bruce Chilton, The Isaiah Targum (The Aramaic Bible 11), xxiii-xxvi; John Bowker, The Targums and Rabbinic Literature (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1969), ix-xi; R. K. Harrison, Introduction to the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969), 226-228. They show that for the first-century readers of Revelation the expression "the spirit of prophecy" meant the Holy Spirit who divinely inspires and empowers prophets to declare the message revealed and entrusted to them by God. This concept is attested also in the New Testament (cf. *Luke 2:25-32; 2 Peter 1:21*).*GOP 195.2* 

At this point, a question arises: does the expression "the spirit of prophecy" refer to the Holy Spirit with whom all Christians are filled for their task of witnessing in the world, or does it refer to a specific gift of the Holy Spirit that distinguishes certain persons in the church from the rest of the believers? GOP 195.3

The above Jewish sources show that the expression "the spirit of prophecy" referred to the Holy Spirit speaking through specific persons called prophets, rather than to the whole body of believers in their prophetic role. This notion is also affirmed by *Revelation 22:8*, 9, which is clearly complementary to 19:10. <sup>32As rightly observed by Bauckham, 133.</sup> In both passages, John falls at the feet of the angel to worship him; and in both, the angel warns him not to do so. However, in *Revelation 22:9*, the angel explains that the "brethren who have the testimony of Jesus" of 19:10 are "the prophets." Hermann Strathmann rightly observes: *GOP 195.4* 

According to the parallel 22:9, the brothers referred to are not believers in general but the prophets. . . . This is the point of v.10c. If they have the marturia lesou, they have the spirit of prophecy, i.e., they are prophets . . . like the angel who simply stands in the service of the marturia lesou (cf. 1:1). <sup>33Hermann Strathmann, "martu,j</sup> etc.," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, ed. G. Kittel (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967), 4:501. *GOP 195.5* 

That the concept of the Spirit bestowing the prophets with the

prophetic gift is in view here is also affirmed by *Revelation 22:6*: "These words are faithful and true; and the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent his angels to show to His bond-servants the things which must shortly take place." The angel's designation of himself as "a fellow servant with you and your brethren the prophets" is particularly significant in light of the fact that in the Old Testament the prophets were the servants of Yahweh (cf. *Amos 3:7*).*GOP 195.6* 

The equation of "the testimony of Jesus" with "the spirit of prophecy" also shows that "the testimony of Jesus" does not refer to the historic testimony of Jesus while in the flesh, as argued by some scholars 34See Hans LaRondelle, who, following some scholars, argues that "the testimony of Jesus" refers to the historic testimony of Jesus that he bore in His earthly life and ministry. Thus, the term "the spirit of prophecy" is not restricted to a chosen group of believers: it rather embraces all faithful Christians who "have" the testimony of Jesus (How to Understand the End-time Prophecies of the Bible [Sarasota, Fla.: First Impressions, 1997], 287-290). Space does not allow for an extensive treatment of the subject. I do not find this view convincing, because it is based more on theological and philosophical conjecture than exegetical and contextual evidence. but to His post resurrection testimony through the prophetic gift for the purpose of showing "the things which must soon take place" (Rev. 1:1). James Moffatt comments: GOP 196.1

"For the testimony or witness of (i.e., borne by) Jesus is (i.e., constitutes) the spirit of prophecy." This prose marginal comment specifically defines the brethren who hold the testimony of Jesus as possessors of prophetic inspiration. The testimony of Jesus is practically equivalent to Jesus testifying (22:20). It is the self-revelation of Jesus which moves the Christian prophets. 

35James Moffatt, "The Revelation of St. John the Divine," The Expositor's Greek Testament, ed. W. R. Nicoll (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 5:465. 

GOP 196.2

This assertion is further affirmed in the opening statement of the book (*Rev. 1:1-3*), which describes the chain of transmission of divine revelation from God to the church as a three-part process. The prologue tells us that the divine revelation begins with God. Jesus communicates the revelation through His angel to the

prophet (in this case, to John) in a visionary presentation. John "bore witness" to the things shown to him in vision, which he refers to as "the word of God" and "the testimony of Jesus" (verse 2). These things he passed subsequently to the church as the words of prophecy (verse 3). GOP 196.3

Here and throughout the book, the phrase "the testimony of Jesus" is equated with "the word of God" (verses 2, 9; *Rev. 20:4*). The expression "the word of God" (ho logos tou theou) in the Greek Old Testament (LXX) refers regularly to the prophetic vision (cf. *Hos. 1:1*; *Joel 1:1*; *Mic. 1:1*; *Hag. 1:1*; *Zech. 1:7*). Thus, by referring to the contents of Revelation as "the word of God," John shows that what he wrote down came from God in the same way as the messages of the Old Testament prophets. *GOP 196.4* 

Thus we see that *Revelation 1:1-3* shows that Jesus communicates "the word of God" to the prophets in vision as His own testimony, wherefrom it is "the testimony of Jesus." This concept is emphasized also in *Hebrews 1:1*, which states that God, who in the past spoke through the prophets, now speaks through His Son. In the words of G. B. Caird: "It is the word spoken by God and attested by Jesus that the Spirit takes and puts into the mouth of the Christian prophets." 36Caird, 238. GOP 196.5

The prologue of Revelation thus seems to be the key to unlocking the meaning of the statement, "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." It shows that "the testimony of Jesus" is "the word of God" conveyed by Christ as His testimony to the church by means of "the spirit of prophecy." <sup>37For</sup> an alternative view, see Kenneth Strand, who concludes that the "word of God" and "the testimony of Jesus" refer to the Old Testament prophetic message and the New Testament apostolic witness ("The Two Witnesses of Rev. 11:3-12," Andrews University Seminary Studies 19, no. 2 [1981]: 131-135). It is referred to as "the spirit of prophecy" because it is the Spirit who inspires and puts into the mouth of the prophet the words of Christ enabling them to communicate the prophetic word to God's people on earth (2 Peter 1:20, 21). When the prophet transmits "the testimony of Jesus Christ" to the church, the church is to receive it as the "words of the prophecy" (Rev. 1:1). This is also further evidence that "the testimony of Jesus" is the selfrevelation of Jesus to His church given through the gift of

prophecy. GOP 196.6

### The Spirit of Prophecy in Revelation

As we have seen so far, the evidence from the contemporary Jewish extra biblical sources and Revelation itself show that the phrase "the spirit of prophecy" (Rev. 19:10) refers not to all believers in general but only to those called by God to prophetic ministry. 38Bauckham, 160. Contrary to Beale, who views tes propheteias in Revelation 19:10 as a descriptive genitive denoting believers as prophetic people. He argues that the prophets in the text in view are "not an exclusive office but the same group mentioned as prophets elsewhere in the book, where the prophetic role of the entire church is in mind" (The Book of Revelation, 948). So also Osborne, 678. Likewise, the expression "the testimony of Jesus" in Revelation 12:17 and 19:10 does not refer to believers bearing witness about Christ, but to the testimony that Jesus bears through His prophets inspired by the Spirit, just as was the case with the prophets in the Old Testament. In Revelation prophets are regularly mentioned as a group distinguished from the rest of the believers (11:18; 16:6; 18:20, 24; 22:6, 9). 39So Osborne, 678. Believers are in possession of the testimony of Jesus conveyed to them through the agency of prophets. The testimony of Jesus is thus the substance of the prophetic message. GOP 197.1

Revelation 19:10 is thus in line with the teaching of the rest of the New Testament, where the prophets in the church are distinguished as a special group within the church, just as was the case with the prophets in the Old Testament. Many modern scholars uphold this assertion. For instance, Richard Bauckham argues that a distinction is to be drawn between the special vocation of the Christian prophets to declare the word of God within the Christian community, and the general vocation of the Christian community as a whole to declare the word of God in the world. The former will then subserve the latter. The Spirit speaks through the prophets to the churches and through the churches to the world. However, as far as specific references to the Spirit go, those we have so far examined concern exclusively the Spirit's inspiration of Christian prophecy addressed to the churches. <sup>40Bauckham, 162; also Beckwith, 729, 730.</sup>GOP 197.2

Similarly, David Aune and many others hold that the phrase "the spirit of prophecy" should be understood as "the power that allows

certain individuals to have visionary experiences and gives them revelatory insights not available to ordinary people."  $^{41}$ Aune,  $^{1039}$ ; also Caird, 238; Robert L. Thomas, Revelation 8-22: An Exegetical Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1992), 377.  $_{GOP}$  198.1

The book of Revelation recognizes the presence and ministry of such individuals with the prophetic gift in the churches in Asia in John's days—"your brothers the prophets" (Rev. 22:9; cf. verse 6) without informing us of their role and activities in those churches. <sup>42Hill, 417.</sup> But, they are clearly referred to as the servants, the prophets. John the revelator had a leading role in this group. Although he never refers to himself as a prophet, he functions in a role similar to that of the Old Testament prophets. Like Paul prior to him (2 Cor. 12:1), he claims that he received a special revelation from God. And he bore witness to "the testimony of Jesus Christ" that was communicated to him in vision (Rev. 1:2). The contents of the book he wrote are "the words of the prophecy" (verse 3; Rev. 22:7, 18) conveyed to him as he was taken in Spirit (Rev. 1:10; 4:2; 17:2; 21:10) in vision. John was thus an agent through whom the Spirit conveved the word of God as Christ's testimony to the church. The book of Revelation claims to be a prophetic book— Christ's own testimony to the church conveyed by the Spirit. 43It is doubtful whether Revelation 11:11 and 22:6 refer to the Holy Spirit, while 13:15: 16:13, 14: and 18:2 refer to satanic spirit/spirits. Four times the Spirit is referred to as "the seven Spirits" (Rev. 1:4; 3:1; 4:5; 5:6) and 14 times as "the Spirit." Of these 14 references, seven occur in the conclusion of the seven messages to the churches: "Who has an ear let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches" (Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22). Four describe John being carried in the Spirit to be shown the things in vision (Rev. 1:10; 4:2; 17:3; 21:10). Two refer to the words of the Spirit cited in Revelation to provide comfort to God's people in midst of persecution (Rev. 14:13) and to infuse the church with a longing to meet Christ when He comes in glory and power (Rev. 22:17). The last reference to the Spirit is found in Revelation 19:10. GOP 198.2

The Holy Spirit plays an essential role in the transmission of the prophetic revelation in the book of Revelation. The word "spirit" (pneuma) occurs <sup>44</sup>See Richard Bauckham, The Theology of the Book of Revelation, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 115. times in Revelation, of which 18 refer to the Holy Spirit. <sup>45</sup>As rightly observed by

Osborne, 678. Of the 18, 17 refer to John's inspiration of prophecy, while *Revelation 19:10* refers to the prophetic office in general. The Holy Spirit is regularly alluded to as the Spirit in the book, which further affirms the assertion that "the Spirit" in 19:10 refers to the Holy Spirit. *GOP 198.3* 

In Revelation the reference to the Holy Spirit concerns prophetic inspiration and the communication of the prophetic message. The activity of the Holy Spirit is administered through prophets in the church 46Bauckham, The Theology of the Book of Revelation, 115. Four times John is carried in the Spirit to be shown the things in vision (Rev. 1:10; 4:2; 17:3; 21:10), just as Ezekiel in the Old Testament (Eze. 3:12, 14; 8:3; 37:1; etc.). The prophecy is the Word of God borne by Christ as His own testimony to the church and conveyed by the Spirit. The Holy Spirit enables the prophet to receive the prophetic message in the visionary experience. 47lbid., 116. This is best seen in the conclusion of the messages to the seven churches. which are designated as the voice of the Spirit conveying to the churches the words of Jesus exhorting them to come out of their spiritual lethargy: "Who has an ear let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches" (Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22). What the Spirit says is actually what Christ says. 481bid., 117 This brings to mind Jesus' description of the role of the Spirit: "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you" (John 16:13, 14).GOP 198.4

An emphasis on the Spirit in connection with prophecy distinguishes between true and false prophets (cf. Rev. 2:20-23). In this lies the test of true prophets. At the time of John the prophetic gift was opposed by self-appointed prophets like Jezebel in the church of Thyatira, who claimed she had the prophetic gift (verse 20). In his other letter, John urged the Christians in Asia to test the spirits to see whether they come from God, "because many false prophets have gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1). They must heed what the Spirit speaks to the churches. It is also significant that, in the final conflict, one of the key players in the final crisis of this earth's

history is referred to in Revelation as the "false prophet." That is why God's end-time people need Christ's special guidance conveyed to them by means of the spirit of prophecy—as provided in Scripture, in the book of Revelation, and through a genuine prophet who may be sent to them by God. However, it is not just the manifestation of the prophetic gift in their midst only, but also heeding the prophetic message that separates God's people from the unfaithful at the time of the end (cf. Rev. 1:3).GOP 199.1

#### Conclusion

Does Revelation show that God's people living at the time of the end will experience prophetic ministry in their midst similar to that of God's people in Old Testament times and in John's day? The prophetic ministry is visible in the Bible. It has been present in the church since its establishment at Sinai and throughout Israel's history, and continues in the Christian church today. It will be present in the church until the very moment when the triumphant and glorified church will stand victoriously before the throne of God. The book of Revelation shows that John the revelator was not the last of the prophets, and that the prophetic ministry will continue after his day in the ages to come. While this might be true of God's people throughout the Christian age, Revelation 12:17 and 19:10 make it clear that God's end-time people in particular are characterized by being in possession of "the testimony of Jesus" conveyed through "the spirit of prophecy." In other words, at the time of the end, the church will have the prophetic guidance as in the time of John. Revelation mentions the martyrdom of "the saints and prophets" in the final crisis (16:6, 18:20, 24). GOP 199.2

Thus, Revelation 19:10 (together with 22:6, 9) provides God's people living in the closing days of this earth's history with the assurance of God's special care and guidance through the prophetic gift, just as it was true of God's people of old. What was true of the church throughout history will also be true of the church at the time of the end. The Bible does not indicate that the prophetic gift will cease some time prior to the Parousia. Revelation shows that the church at the time of the end will experience prophetic guidance until the conclusion of this earth's history when, with the Second Coming, the prophetic gift will lose its function and purpose for the triumphant church. GOP 199.3

Seventh-day Adventists have traditionally viewed the predictions of *Revelation 12:17* and *19:10* as having been fulfilled in the life and ministry of Ellen White (1827-1915). Although such a belief is firmly grounded in the prophecies of the last book of the New Testament, it must be understood that these texts are not prophecies about Ellen White. They are rather about the full manifestation of the testimony of Jesus among God's people through the gift of

prophecy at the time of the end. However, Seventh-day Adventists have experienced the manifestation of the prophetic gift in their midst in the life and ministry of Ellen White as the direct fulfillment of biblical prophecy. What was true of the covenant community during the Exodus could also be applied to the infant Adventist Church that arose in the aftermath of the Great Disappointment: "By a prophet the Lord brought Israel up from Egypt, and by a prophet he was preserved" (Hos. 12:13).GOP 200.1

The purpose and function of the gift of prophecy in the church today is much like that of the prophetic ministry in biblical times. The role of prophets is to provide guidance to the church and to keep the church in the unity of faith (Prov. 29:18; Eph. 4:13, 14). According to Ephesians 3:2-6, prophets are the agents of God's revelation. Their role is to unpack the mysteries of Jesus Christ, His life and death, His resurrection. His work in heaven, and His return to earth. William Barclay explains: "We can define the true prophet as the man who has received from Christ the message he brings to men. and whose words and works are at one and the same time an act of witness to Christ." 49Barclay, 2:177. Many other scholars share this view, including Charles R. Erdman. The Revelation of John (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1936), 148; Wilfrid J. Harrington, Understanding the Apocalypse (Washington, D.C.: Corpus Books, 1969), 226; Beasley-Murray, 276; Morris, 222; Mounce, 342. Bauckham notes similarly that the Spirit of prophecy speaks through the Christian prophets bringing the word of the exalted Christ to his people on earth, endorsing on earth the words of heavenly revelations, and directing the prayers of the churches to their heavenly Lord. These are the special functions of the Christian prophets, whom Revelation distinguishes as a special group within the churches ([Rev.] 11:18; 16:6; 18:20, 24; 22:9). 50Bauckham, The Climax of Prophecy, 160. GOP 200 2

The gift of prophecy is a token of God's care for His people. According to Peter, the Spirit prophesied through the Old Testament prophets of Christ's suffering and His future glory to follow (1 Peter 1:10, 11). In a similar manner, the Spirit bears witness to the future coming of Christ in power and glory. <sup>51Swete, 249; Mounce, 350.</sup> "The prophetic word" is like a light shining in a dark place. God's people will need prophetic guidance until the daybreak

and arising of "the morning star" (2 Peter 1:19). In the Bible, the morning star is Jesus Christ Himself (Rev. 22:16). With His coming, we will have no further need of this lamplike prophetic word (1 Cor. 13:8-10). Paul states that when we finally see Him "face to face" (verse 12), then prophecy "will be done away" with (verse 8) and lose its function. Until that day, we are dependent on prophetic guidance as provided in Scripture, as well as through a genuine prophet who may be sent by God. We are urged by the apostle Paul not "to quench the Spirit; do not despise prophetic utterances. But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good" (1 Thess. 5:19-21).GOP 200.3

# Part II—Historical Studies

# Chapter 10 - The Gift of Prophecy in the Early Church and Middle Ages

John W. Reeve and Rodrigo Galiza

The narrative of the developing understanding of the spiritual gift of prophecy in the early centuries of Christianity involves various perspectives, such as who was considered a true prophet, the role of prophecy in liturgy, the characteristics of false prophets, and many others. Although we mention these as part of our narrative, they are not our primary thrust. We briefly focus on the role of itinerant prophets (preachers) in the shaping of ecclesiastical structures within Christianity. *GOP* 202.1

As it will become clear in our narrative, early on in Christianity the gift of prophecy was understood generally as enabling one to discern and proclaim the truth. A prophet, then, was a proclaimer of truth. This is why the role of a prophet overlapped with that of a teacher and preacher. But it was not every teacher/preacher who was considered a true prophet. For the early Christians, a divine prophet was one who proclaimed true things related to Jesus as the Christ from God; thus, they spoke from/for God to humanity. 1For more on the gift of prophecy in early Christianity, see David E. Aune, Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983). Aune focuses on the first and second centuries of Christianity in his treatment of prophecy. He gives no brief and succinct definition of what a prophet is. For example, in light of his New Testament analysis he describes a prophet as a church leader (201-211), an itinerant preacher (211-217), and a seer of the future (171-188). This indicates that the gift of prophecy was broad in its function. This paper attempts to describe a single, underlying characteristic of this spiritual gift recognized in the early centuries, that is, the prophet as a divine spokesperson. GOP 202.2

For brevity, our use of Christian sources is selective. We emphasize the literature of the first three centuries because of our view that the trajectory of that time became generally normative of how catholic Christianity would react to the gift of prophecy. We believe the itinerant (uncontrolled) character of true prophets and the rise of false prophets caused the church as an organization to rely increasingly more on local ecclesiastical authority for divine direction. However, this did not hinder Christians outside the established hierarchy from claiming the gift of prophecy. We attempt to accurately elucidate this complex tension between controlling or being controlled by the Holy Spirit through the experiences of those involved in the following stories and to analyze those who claimed to have the prophetic gift of the Spirit. GOP 202.3

# Apostolic Fathers—Where Is the Spirit of God?

Most of the uses of the prophe- words 2They appear 74 times, in 66 verses, in 17 forms in the Apostolic Fathers. Barnabas alone has thirty of them, and most are related to the Israelite prophets found in the Hebrew Scriptures. testifying about Jesus as the Christ (life, death, and resurrection). Barnabas also classifies as prophetic literature that is currently considered pseudepigraphical or noncanonical, such as 4 Ezra (12.1) and Enoch. Their literary usage is similar to how the prophets of the Hebrew Bible, such as Isaiah and Daniel, are used as "Scriptures" (ē graphē), although it is notable that Barnabas does not introduce Enoch with the term prophet or its correlation (Barn. 4:3, 16:5, 6). Certain other references about Jesus as the Christ are taken from sources heretofore unknown to us. This data suggests that the spirit of prophecy in Barnabas was not, like other Christian writings, confined to what we considered inspired writings. All references to the Apostolic Fathers, both Greek and English translations, are taken from The Apostolic Fathers, ed., trans, Bart Ehrman, Loeb Classical Library, 24, 25 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003). in the writings preserved immediately following New Testament times are found in Barnabas. 3This epistle is anonymous, but was soon ascribed to Paul's companion Barnabas. It was highly regarded by Christians, resulting in its inclusion (with the Shepherd of Hermas) as part of the New Testament in one of its most important manuscripts, Codex Sinaiticus. This treatise was likely written between the 90s-120s in Alexandria, Egypt. Its main theme is to correctly interpret the Hebrew Scriptures, given their incorrect interpretation by the Jews. The author understands literally the condemnation of the Israelites, while providing an allegorical/symbolical meaning to their laws such as Sabbath, circumcision, sacrifices, and kosher. Its second section (chaps. 18-20) contains prescriptions, similar to the Didache, "probably originating as a Jewish set of ethical instructions later adopted by a Christian author and broadly disseminated early in the history of the church" (The Apostolic Fathers, 2:5). For more information, see 3-9. the Didache. 4This is the earliest known Christian manual, from the end of the first century or the beginning of the second. It describes Christian rituals such as baptism and the Eucharist, "along with instructions involving itinerant Christian apostles and prophets in an age before the church hierarchy of bishop, presbyters, and deacons was firmly in place" (The Apostolic Fathers, 1:405). For more information, see 405-412. and the Shepherd of Hermas 5Based on its use in the second and third century, after the New Testament, this book was one of the most popular books of early Christians, containing collection of "visions," "commandments/mandates,"

"parables/similitudes" received by Hermas from an angel. This is critical in relation to our discussion of prophecy because it attests to the wide acceptance of divine visionary revelation by early Christians. From its usage in the second century, its author is believed to be from Rome, around the beginning of the second century. Its main message is a call for the church to repent from sins related to family relations, wealth, business dealings, and indecision toward God. For more information, see The Apostolic Fathers, 2:162-169. Reflecting on their use in those documents enables describing the perception of early Christian writers regarding the spiritual gift of prophecy. Most often the spirit of prophecy is equivalent to the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament), which testify of Jesus as Messiah. This gift continues with the apostles, who also testified of Jesus the Christ from God, and remains within the postapostolic church through its current teachers/preachers. GOP 203.1

It is in the Epistle of Barnabas, one of the works now referred to as the works of the Apostolic Fathers, that we find most of the references to prophets. The first reference summarizes the core meaning of what it was to be a prophet at that time. "For through the prophets the Master has made known to us what has happened and what now is; and he has given us the first fruits of the taste of what is yet to be" (Barn. 1:7). The same is expressed by Ignatius in To the Philadelphians: "And we should also love the prophets, because of their proclamation [katengelkenai]" (Ign. Phld. 5:2). First, a prophet is one who speaks on behalf of God about Jesus—"what has happened and what now is"—therefore he teaches about truth. The primary characteristic of a prophet is to proclaim, which Ignatius clarifies using a synonym (katangello) of the verb to (propheteuo). A prophet, however, is not merely any conventional speaker, but one who declares the truth from God about Jesus.GOP 203.2

This hermeneutical focus in Jesus as Christ is central to the definition by the Apostolic Fathers of who constitutes a true prophet. 6This continues with the Church Fathers. See most recently Michael Graves, The Inspiration and Interpretation of Scripture: What the Early Church Can Teach Us (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 32, 55-60. The Christological reading of the Hebrew Scriptures led the author of 1 Clement, for example, to identify Rahab as a prophet. "Because of her faith and hospitality, Rahab the harlot was saved. . . . She should hang a piece of scarlet

from her house—making it clear that it is through the blood of the Lord that redemption will come to all who believe in hope in God. You see, loved ones, not only was faith found in the woman, but prophecy as well" (1 Clem. 12:1-8). Barnabas also saw Jesus as the purpose of prophecy. "Learn this! Because the prophets received his gracious gift, they prophesied looking ahead to him" (Barn. 5:5, 6). "In a similar way he makes another declaration about the cross in another prophet, who says, "When will these things be fulfilled?" [4 Ezra 4:33] says the Lord, "When a tree falls and rises up, and when blood flows from a tree' [4 Ezra 5:5]" (Barn. 12:1). GOP 204.1

Because of this Christocentric perspective, the Apostolic Fathers could claim the Hebrew Scriptures as their own, as if they were Christian Scriptures, and not Jewish. The Apostolic Fathers, 2:3. Moreover, this Christological approach was to be the basis of testing prophetic legitimacy, for as we shall see, certain persons claimed to be prophets, teaching and behaving contrary to what the Apostolic Fathers esteemed to be that of Jesus. In the Didache we find the most extensive explanation from the early church as to how Christians should treat those who called themselves prophets (Did. 10:7-13:4; 15:1, 2). Because of its importance, the first larger section is quoted in full. GOP 204.2

But permit the prophets to give thanks (eucharistein) as often as they wish. And so, welcome anyone who comes and teaches you everything mentioned above. But if the teacher should himself turn away and teach something different, undermining these things, do not listen to him; but if his teaching brings righteousness and the knowledge of the Lord, welcome him as the Lord. But act towards the apostles and prophets as the Gospel decrees. Let every apostle that cometh to you be welcomed as the Lord. But he should not remain except one day; if he must, he may stay one more. But if he remains three days, he is a false prophet. When an apostle leaves he should take nothing except bread, until he arrives at his night's lodging. If he asks for money, he is a false prophet. Do not test or condemn a prophet speaking in the Spirit. For every sin will be forgiven, but this sin will not be forgiven. Not everyone who speaks in the Spirit is a prophet, but only one who conducts himself like the Lord. Thus the false prophet and the prophet will both be known by their conduct. No prophet who orders a meal in the Spirit eats of it, if he does, he is a false prophet. Every prophet who teaches the truth but does not do what he himself teaches is a false prophet. You are not to condemn any prophet who has been approved and is true and who acts on behalf of the earthly mystery of the church, even if he does not teach others to do what he himself does, since he has his judgment with God. For even the ancient prophets behaved in this way. Do not listen to anyone who says in the Spirit, "Give me money," (or something else). But if he tells you to give for others who are in need, let no one judge him. Everyone who comes in the name of the Lord should be welcomed. Then when you exercise your critical judgment, you will know him; for you understand what is true and what is false (Did. 10:7-12:1). GOP 204.3

According to this Christian manual, there were prophets in the end of the first century or the beginning of the second century. Here the role of the prophet, apostle, and teacher is seen as nearly one and the same, in speaking on behalf of God. These three spiritual gifts, as specified in 1 Corinthians 12:28, 29, were apparently combined in itinerant preachers of the time. This combination of gifts is basically what the Didache considered to be a prophet. Notice that in 11:3, 4 the author advises the church concerning the "apostles and prophets" [saying,] "Let every apostle" be received into the home. If he stays more than one day he should be considered a "false prophet" (11:5). However, when the "apostle leaves," he should take only necessary food, because if he asks for more, he is a "false prophet" (11:6). They (apostles and prophets) are also considered teachers of truth (didaskon ten aletheian), speaking in the Spirit (11:8). The interchangeable uses of these spiritual gifts Christianity they were suggest early in (apostles/prophets/ teachers). 8For a similar assessment of these three gifts as "ad hoc formulations," see Aune, 201. GOP 205.1

Therefore, the first test of a prophet/apostle/teacher is conformity to the truth (11:1, 10) since the common function of these three spiritual gifts is proclaiming the word of God. Within the Didache, conformity to truth likely refers to the teachings of the Hebrew Bible received through the apostles (6:1). The second test of a true prophet is his behavior. Because false teachers can partially

proclaim "truthful" messages, the church should be aware that "not everyone who speaks in the Spirit is a prophet." and that only those who behave "like the Lord" (11:8) should be considered to be a true prophet and, consequently, be received as such. The author explains the likeness to Jesus as constituting humility, contrary to greediness. This test is repeated in 12:2-5, which suggests its importance in how to detect legitimate godly Christian teachers from wandering profiteers. 9See also Polycarp, Epistle to the Philippians 6:1. Interestingly, this is the only section in this document that uses the word "prophet," referring here to the Hebrew Scriptures, which foretold the "coming of our Lord." Immediately after the parallel mention of apostles and prophets, a warning is given to avoid "stumbling blocks, false brother, and those who carry the name of the Lord in hypocrisy, leading the empty-minded (kenous) astray" (6:3; italics supplied). This is similar to the description of false prophets in the Shepherd of Hermas, which follows. From an Adventist perspective, George Rice also identifies greed as a main characteristic of a false prophet, which is a perversion of the true gift of the Spirit, which produces selfless love. George Rice, "Spiritual Gifts," in Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology, ed. Raoul Dederen, Commentary Reference Series, 12 (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald®, 2000), 618. Based on the aforementioned information, we deduce that, early in Christianity, many congregations considered certain itinerant preachers to be prophets. GOP 205.2

These apparent wandering figures of early Christianity 10See the relation between the Christian prophet and the holy man of antiquity in Peter Brown, Authority and the Sacred: Aspects of the Christianisation of the Roman World (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995). are directly involved in the liturgy of the local church (10:7—offering thanks or the Eucharist), and also functioned as priests, deserving even to receive the first fruits of the congregation's produce for their sustenance (13:3). This hints of what type of benefits this "profession" could offer to charlatans. Because of the possibility of false prophets intruding into the church <sup>11</sup>According to the last chapter of the Didache (16), the appearance of false prophets would increase in the last days, indicating that Christ would return soon. These false prophets would perform miracles and deceive many Christians, anticipating the coming of the antichrist (the world deceiver—kosmoplanes). This eschatological expectation, likely based on Matthew 24 and 2 Thessalonians 2, was a good reason to be suspicious of prophets. and consuming the energy and vitality of

Christian congregations, the role of charismatic figures had begun to be reserved for local church leaders as a safety measure. Similarly, in the last references to prophets in the Didache (15:1, 2) is a command that the local church should elect bishops and deacons (*episkopous kai diakonous*) who "would conduct (*leitourgousi*) the ministry of the prophets and teachers among" them, although this would take some time to become the norm. Meanwhile, in the first two centuries of Christianity, prophets remained uncontrolled by the local hierarchy. *GOP* 206.1

The Shepherd of Hermas supports this notion. In its Mandates, resembling the content of the Didache, local congregations are advised to abstain from evil spirits, but to trust divine prophets. Congregations could not readily identify these evil spirits because they proclaimed a certain degree of truth and likely behaved like true prophets (Herm. Mand. 11 [43]). Similar to the Didache, the character of these itinerant preachers determined their supernatural origin. "The one who has the spirit that comes from above is meek, gentle, and humble; he abstains from all evil and the vain desire of this age: he makes himself more lowly than all others; and he never gives an answer to anyone when asked, nor does he speak in private. The holy spirit does not speak when the person wants to speak, but when God wants him to speak" (Herm. Mand. 11:8 [43:8]). Whereas false teachers prophesy when motivated by gain from the local congregation, true prophets prophesy when God wants them to speak. False prophets were moved by evil desires in mixing truth with error to deceive double-minded and empty (Kevovg) Christians, speaking in secret and looking to be rewarded by Christians by asking for remuneration for their work and only prophesying when they were paid (11:1 [43:12, 13]). GOP 206.2

Because these false prophets met in secret and deceived church members to give them money that should have been used for local needs (see Didache 13:3), they needed to be challenged. Similarly, in Didache 15:1, the Shepherd of Hermas exhorted that it was the role of the local "gathering filled with upright men who have the divine spirit (synagogen plere andron dikaion echonton pneuma theotetos)" to distinguish and shun these malicious teachers (Herm. Mand. 11:9 [43:9]). This also reveals a transition to spirit-filled itinerant preachers who have a message to local communities from

God in establishing divinely appointed teachers in local congregations. GOP 206.3

These local leaders would become the foundation stones of the (cf. Eph. 2:20-22). The Shepherd of Hermas, in its similitudes, compared the church to a tower with a foundation composed of many rocks, identifying prophets, deacons (ministers), apostles, and teachers (Herm. Sim. 9. 15. 4 [92. 4]). As previously noted in the Didache, the role of the teacher/apostle/prophet was to proclaim a message from God, and was in the process of fusion as evidenced in the Martyrdom of Polycarp. The bishop of Smyrna of the second century is described in this document as an apostolic and prophetic teacher (didaskalos apostolikos kai prophetikos) (Mart. Pol. 16:2). The reason for his title is clearly stated, "for every word that came forth from his mouth was fulfilled and will be fulfilled" (16:2). His role as a foretelling figure (seer) is most clearly portrayed in a vision he received concerning his coming death. Twice this revelation is mentioned (5:2 and 12:3) for the vision "had to be fulfilled (plerothenai)" (12:3). Although the characteristic of a prophet is the foretelling of truth, in his last description, Polycarp is called an apostolic teacher. Therefore, by the second century we see the claim that the Spirit of God residing in the church through elected leaders who would teach the truth they received from a previous ecclesiastical authority. These were not only itinerant preachers (leaders of the church), who traveled throughout the Empire proclaiming messages from God to local congregations, but were also teachers of the Scriptures, like Paul and Apollos. GOP 206.4

# **Taming the Spirit**

By the beginning of the second century, hints of ecclesiastical control of the Spirit become evident. Toward the end of the second century, and by the third and fourth century, this move was complete for certain theologians. This on reliance ecclesiastical authorities instead of uncontrollable itinerant prophets was already stated by Ignatius (To the Ephesians: To the Trallians) at the turn of the first century in his declarations about the authoritative role of the local bishop. "And so we are clearly obliged to look upon the bishop (episkopon) as the Lord himself (Ign. Eph. 6:2). "You must not engage in any activity apart from the bishop (episkopon), but be subject also to the presbytery (presbyterio) as to the apostles of Jesus Christ . . . without these no group can be called a church. . . . So too let everyone respect the deacons (diakonous) like Jesus Christ, and also the bishop (episkopon), who is the image of the Father; and let them respect the presbyters (presbyterous) like the council of God and the band of the apostles. Apart from these a gathering cannot be called a church" (Ign. Trail. 2:2; 3:1). Although Ignatius uses the term prophet seven times, it refers to the Hebrew Scriptures. Ignatius gives no hint of any itinerant teacher/prophet/apostle who considered divinely inspired. The prophetic role for him is limited to the established local leaders. Because the role of a prophet is to speak on behalf of God, there is no need of any wandering figures. since each local bishop functions as a divine emissary. GOP 207.1

This negative sentiment toward existing wandering prophets gained momentum with Cyprian in the third century, who barely uses the word "prophet," 1Many times he uses the term prophet together with apostles as another way of saying Scriptures or the teachings of the church (Epistles 55:10; 80:2 [ANF 5:350, 407], De lapsis 7, Ad Fortinatum 13 [ANF 5:439, 506]). All references to Church Fathers are from The Ante-Nicene Fathers, ed. and trans. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (New York: Christian Literature, 1885-1896). "prophecy," or the verb "to prophesy." When he does use it, it is almost always in reference to the Hebrew Scriptures (past) or false prophets (present). The false prophets are like Jezebel, who destroyed the church of God from within (*Epistles* 51:22 [*Ante-Nicene Fathers* (ANF) 5:332]; 39:5 [ANF 5:318]). 13In contrast to false prophets who bring dissention, the body of Christ is united. He wrote, "There is

one God, and Christ is one, and there is one church, and one chair founded upon the rock by the word of the Lord. Another altar cannot be constituted nor a new priesthood be made, except the one altar and the one priesthood." For Cyprian, the schismatics should be expelled from any contact with the church, since they are from the evil one. He gives one example of a false prophetess that showed up among Christians. He describes that she was in a state of ecstasy performing miracles, and by her attitude she deceived many to follow her and even a deacon and presbyter to have sex with her. Cyprian also rejected her as a legitimate prophet because as a woman she was offering the Eucharist and was baptizing. Moreover, Christians of good reputation condemned her (*Epistles* 74:10 [ANF 5:393]). *GOP* 207.2

For Cyprian, it sufficed to declare Jezebel as deriving from the devil because she brought disunity to the church. Cyprian considered disrupting the unity of the church to be the most horrendous sin. characteristic of an evil spirit. Montanists, for example, who claimed to have the Spirit of God, are damned because "if they have separated themselves from the church of God, [they] can have nothing of power or of grace, since all power and grace are established in the church where the elders preside, who possess the power both of baptizing, and of imposition of hands, and of ordaining" (Epistles 74:7 [ANF 5:392]). Therefore, it is unimportant whether one performs wonders and has supernatural experiences, which can be sublime, but not always divine. For Cyprian, salvation is not attained through miracles (Matt. 7:22), because what really matters is love for the unity of the body of Christ, the church (De unitate ecclesiae 15 [ANF 5:426]). 14See, for example, how the fundamental beliefs stress also the unity of the church. Seventh-day Adventists Believe: An Exposition of the Fundamental Beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (Boise, Idaho: Pacific Press®, 2005), 239, 249. The argument of love and unity resonates beautifully with the emphasis of the Scriptures, but in his effort to maintain the unity of the church Cyprian created a problematic firewall that was difficult to penetrate. GOP 208.1

The situation Cyprian articulates is that the church becomes almost immune to correction. In other words, by subordinating the divine prophetic voice to the bishops, it was perceived that God no longer needed to bring a word of reproof from outside the ecclesiastical

leadership because the church was perfectly settled in the truth. For Cyprian, truth resided in the church, or its leadership. Whereas in Israel of old, God sent prophets to reprove its leaders when needed, Cyprian sets a pattern that would influence most of Western Christianity and put an end to rebuking prophets for centuries to come, at least for the majority of Christians. Therefore, how did Christianity shift from a movement founded by prophets, open to current prophetic messengers, to a structure closed to this spiritual gift as manifested in itinerant preachers/teachers? GOP 208.2

As distinct forms of Christianity developed throughout the Roman Empire, teaching not only different things about Jesus, but opposing apostolic doctrines, Christian congregations needed to face the challenge of heresy and false prophets. Echoing the worries of Jesus and the apostles themselves 15E.g., Matt. 7:22, 23; 24:4, 5, 11; Acts 20:28-30; 2 Thess. 2:3, 4, 7-12; 2 Tim. 3:1-6; 1 John 4:1-3. about evil spirits deceiving the church, the Apostolic Fathers passed on the warning to the churches that they should have discernment, watching specially the behavior of so-called prophets. Not everyone who spoke in the spirit was a messenger of the Lord. Prophets, however, were not completely shunned in this generation of Christians; rather, the prophetic role was exchanged for the authority of local leaders. In Irenaeus (c. 130-220) we find a movement toward closing its door to prophets as expressed by Cyprian in the third century. Prophets by that time would be confined to the past. The official summary of beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists summarizes this well: GOP 208.3

These gifts have not always manifested themselves abundantly in the Christian church. After the death of the apostles, prophets enjoyed respectability in many circles until A.D. 300. But the decline of spirituality in the church and the resultant apostasy led to a diminishing of both the presence and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. At the same time false prophets caused a loss of confidence in the prophetic gift. <sup>16Seventh-day Adventists Believe, 250</sup>.GOP 209.1

# Spirit, Scriptures, and Church Leadership

As with the Apostolic Fathers who preceded him, Irenaeus, the bishop of Lyon, considered the prophetic gift as manifested in the Hebrew Scriptures. The basic understanding of a prophet remains the same, that of a divine spokesperson who proclaims the Messiah. However, whereas the Apostolic Fathers and the New Testament included the proclamation of the apostles who referred to Christ, as a manifestation of the prophetic gift, Irenaeus—in Against Heresies (Adversus Haereses) — limited the prophetic gift only to those who foretold the coming of Christ (Haer. 4. 20. 5). Thus, for Irenaeus, prophets were dead. Although the apostles had the divine spirit of inspiration since they testified about Jesus as the Messiah, they were not called prophets by Irenaeus. John the Baptist exemplifies the distinction he makes of these spiritual gifts. prophets and apostles. Whereas prophets foretold the advent of Christ, the apostles saw and testified about it. John the Baptist was the transition point because he both foretold about and witnessed Jesus. According to Irenaeus, this is why he is called by Jesus "more than a prophet," "because, [the Scriptures state] 'first apostles, secondarily prophets'; (I Cor. 12:28); but all things from one and the same God Himself" (Haer. 3. 11. 4). The implication is that the spiritual gift of prophecy is not manifested presently in itinerant preachers, for Christians (the church) are currently proclaiming what has already been foretold by the prophets and apostles, which is registered in the Scriptures. GOP 209.2

Based on this premise, a devastating blow was leveled to the claims of those who called themselves prophets or who were inspired after the apostles. Marcion, Valentinians, the Gnostics, Montanists, and others were clearly the target of Irenaeus. His main argument against these "vain, unlearned and also audacious" false prophets, who "set at nought the gift of the Spirit," was that there are only four true witnesses of Jesus Christ (the written Gospels), nothing less (Marcion) or more (Gnostics, Valentinians, and Montanism) (Haer. 3. 11. 9). Following this logic, his argument limited the gift of prophecy to the time of the New Testament. His final blow to prophetic pretenders was to attach truth to the apostles. The Christian rule of faith was found in those churches that maintained apostolic contact through their bishops. GOP 209.3

True knowledge is the doctrine of the *apostles*, and the *ancient constitution* of the church throughout all the world, and the distinctive manifestation of the body of Christ according to the *successions of the bishops*, by which they have handed down that church which exists in every place, and has come even unto us, being guarded and preserved without any forging of Scriptures, by a very complete system of doctrine, and neither receiving addition nor curtailment; and reading without falsification, and a lawful and diligent exposition in harmony with the Scriptures, both without danger and without blasphemy; and the preeminent gift of love, which is more precious than knowledge, *more glorious than prophecy*, and which excels all the other gifts [of God] (*Haer.* 4. 33. 8; italics supplied). *GOP 210.1* 

The reference to Montanism and other groups who claimed to have the Spirit of God shows that Christians existed who still believed in the presence of prophecy, similar to the Apostolic Fathers. The issue tackled by Irenaeus and later by Cyprian was to determine its legitimacy as divine. Their answer was clear: "Where the church is, there is the Spirit of God; and where the Spirit of God is, there is the church" (Haer. 3. 24. 1). However, the groups that Irenaeus attacked also claimed the same authority and used the same basic Scriptures. The ground of debate then became hermeneutical, or the principles of interpretation (exegesis). Irenaeus, Cyprian, and later Origen articulated what would become catholic (universal) Christian belief about the spirit of prophecy, that "right interpretation can be found only where the true Christian faith and discipline have been maintained, i.e., the church." 17J.N.D. Kelly, Early Christian Doctrines (New York: Harper and Row, 1978), 40. Kelly explains that in this period close to the death of the apostles, the establishment of truth was obviously associated with them since they were the ones who learned from Jesus personally. But since other groups were also claiming to be associated with Jesus, the ground of debate was hermeneutical. "For that reason correct exegesis was the prerogative of the Church, where the apostolic tradition or doctrine which was the key to Scriptures had been kept intact" (38; italics supplied). The ecclesiological principle of determining the correct spirit led to such questions as What is the church? and Who is the church? Irenaeus and later Cyprian provide what would become the orthodox answer—the church is every congregation where an apostle instituted a leader and taught the words of Jesus. "This is

the most abundant proof that there is one and the same vivifying faith, which has been preserved in the church from the apostles until now, and handed down in truth" (*Haer.* 3. 3. 3). <sup>18For more on Irenaeus and the church as the locus of truth, see Mary Ann Donovan, One Right Reading? A Guide to Irenaeus (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1997). See especially 93, 94 for a summary. *GOP 210.2*</sup>

Following Irenaeus and throughout the Middle Ages, the concept of prophets for most Christian thinkers was a thing of the past. 19George Rice captures this absent presence of the divine spirit in mainstream Christianity from the third century to the Middle Ages. In his historical overview of spiritual gifts, Rice describes Montanism (c. 170s), and then John Wesley (1700s), in light of Montanism, a gap of approximately 15 centuries. However, his historical review needs to be, questioned. Why did he choose only Montanism as an example of the supposed gift of prophecy in the early church and then jump to Wesley? (Rice, 638). Although this is not explicitly stated, this is the impression they give by their limited use of the terms related to prophecy (e.g., prophesy, prophet, seer) compared to the Apostolic Fathers. When they do use it, it is primarily a positive reference to the Hebrew Scriptures or a negative label (false prophet) to current individuals who claim to have a divine message (truth) outside of the apostolic tradition contained in the church. However, even this last use is meager and general. The attitudes of Irenaeus and Cyprian became the norm. A confirmation that this was so in orthodox Christianity is the single reference to a prophet in Peter Lombard's Sentences book 4, where he expounded the sacraments and ministries of the church under the title On the Doctrine of Signs. Quoting the work of Isidore of Seville (d. 636) about etymologies of words, Lombard's (d. 1160) reference to a prophet is "On the Seer: 'A seer (Lat. Vates) is so called from the force of the mind (vi mentis) and the meaning of the term is manifold: at times, it means priest, at times prophet, at times poet'" (Distinction XXIV. 18 [148]). 20Peter Lombard, The Sentences—Book 4: On the Doctrine of Signs, ed. Joseph Goering and Giulio Silano, trans. Giulio Silano, Mediaeval Sources in Translation, 48 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2007), 149; for the influence of Lombard's Sentence in Christian theology, see Marcia L. Colish, Medieval Foundations of the Western Intellectual Tradition, 400-1400, Yale Intellectual History of the West (New Haven, Conn.: Yale Univesity Press, 1997), <sup>282.</sup> The briefness and vagueness of this reference speaks for itself.

That Lombard's Sentences became the theology textbook of the High Middle Ages up to the Reformation is notable, which summarizes what catholic Christianity was teaching for centuries before him. *GOP 210.3* 

This posture toward ignoring the possibility of current itinerant prophets and the confinement of divine authority in the church are just confirmation of what Ignatius suggested earlier, and to which Hermas and the Didache hinted. Bishops became endowed with the shower of the Spirit, whereas outside the church was a spiritual wasteland. The situation this created was a leadership immune to correction. In other words, by subordinating the divine prophetic voice to the duly elected bishops, it is believed that God no longer needed to bring a word of reproof from outside, because the church was perfect, settled in the truth, or thus it was thought by mainstream Christianity. However, this is not how everyone saw it. GOP 211.1

# The Gift of Prophecy—A Working Definition

Before proceeding to address the thinking of other groups regarding the presence of the Spirit outside the ecclesiastical authorities, we slightly diverge to a critical issue that undergirds the debate of who has the gift of prophecy, and the definition of prophecy. A common characteristic identified by all Christians previously examined about the role of a prophet is proclaiming/ teaching/professing Jesus as the Messiah. This underpins the Apostolic Fathers' understanding of the writers of the Hebrew Scriptures as "Christian" prophets and how they label the apostles and the writings of what became the New Testament. This Christological definition was central for the argumentation of later generations of Christians. In Christianity, a true prophet teaches and lives what Jesus taught and lived. GOP 211.2

However, the existence of competing answers about what Jesus taught and how He lived (who He was) have led to a narrow definition of the gift of prophecy. Based on warnings of false prophets given by Jesus and His apostles, it was understood early on that not all who claim to have seen God have a divine message. Thus, pushed by the necessity of distinguishing the true from the false, Christian writers developed, early in history, a system that purported direct contact with Jesus through an succession. At this early stage, apostolic succession was not what we know from the medieval Catholic Church. As we have attempted to demonstrate, the early argumentation for it was to bring divine messages as close to Jesus as they could. It was the Christological principle of interpreting the Hebrew Scriptures. The consequence of this principle was that they perceived truth to reside in the correct exegesis (Christological) <sup>21Because</sup> of the emphasis on how to correctly read the Scriptures, one of the most used passages in the New Testament by the early church writers was 2 Corinthians 3, where Paul contrasts the veiled reading of Moses (Torah) with the free/true reading of Scripture in the Lord Jesus. "Now the Lord is the Spirit and where the Lord is, there is freedom" (2 Cor. 3:17, NIV). For the role of the prophetic gift in early Christian exegesis, see Aune, 339-346. that was handed down from Jesus Himself. But what is the role of a prophet in the New Testament? GOP 212.1

This is a legitimate question because the Apostolic Fathers claimed

to have received truth from the apostles themselves (especially in the New Testament, but not restricted to it). Taking all the occurrences of the root prophe- in the New Testament, we find that most of its use is related to the Hebrew Scriptures telling about events of the life of Jesus, and often a passage is quoted from it. A prophet was thus a proclaimer of truth. This broad definition is also applied to individuals in the time of Jesus when the New Testament authors identify some of His followers or believers as prophets. 22This is a list of individuals identified as prophets in the New Testament: Old Testament (e.g., Isaiah, Jeremiah), Jesus, John the Baptist, Anna, the four daughters of Philip, Agabus, and some apostles of Jesus, such as Judas, Silas, Barnabas, Simeon, Manaen, and Saul. Some are unnamed (Acts 11:27). They are proclaimers/teachers/preachers sent by God (apostles) to humanity. As 2 Peter 1:21 expounds, the clearest passage on this topic in all of the New Testament, prophets are men of God carried by the Holy Spirit speaking divine messages. The aspect of proclamation is basic to a prophet, as we see its application to a pagan philosopher in Titus 1:12 and to itinerant preachers in general such as in Matthew 10:41 and Acts 15:32,GOP 212.2

Only in a few occurrences do they foretell the future or perform supernatural wonders (*John 6:14*—Jesus' multiplying bread and fish; *John 9:17*—Jesus opening the eyes of the blind; *Acts 11:25*—Agabus predicting famine). Present prophets are often related to those who are sent by God (apostles) and are teachers (*Matt. 10:40, 41*; *Luke 11:49*; *Acts 13:1*; *Eph. 2:20*; *3:5*; *2 Peter 3:2*; *Rev. 18:20*). This combination of spiritual gifts, prophet/apostle/teacher, may suggest that the gifts listed in 1 Corinthians 12 have functions that overlap, <sup>23</sup>For example, healing and miracles are often synonymous, as is the proclamation of wisdom, teaching, interpreting, and prophesying. Even in the warning against false prophets in 2 Peter 2:1, false teachers are paralleled with false prophets. which is exactly how the Didache framed the gift of prophecy. This suggests that the conflation by the Apostolic Fathers of these spiritual gifts (prophet/preacher/teacher) has a New Testament basis. *GOP 212.3* 

Regarding false prophets, the New Testament has fewer references. Clearly they are perverters of the truth. In 2 Peter 2:1 and 1 John 4:1-3 these perversions are related to the incarnation of Jesus as Messiah from God (Christological principle). Only Acts 13

provides a name and a description of false prophet behaviors. In *Acts 13:6-12* Barjesus or Elymas is called a false prophet and magician (*magon pseudo propheten*), interrupting the preaching of Paul and Barnabas, who have just been called prophets and sent out by the Holy Spirit (verses 1-4). Other New Testament references are merely warnings about the existence of false prophets who pervert the teachings of God/Jesus generally (*Matt. 7:15*; 24:11; *Mark 13:22*; *Luke 6:26*; *Rev. 16:13*; 19:20; 20:10). GOP 212.4

Considering all these texts, a general understanding of a prophet in the New Testament is of a proclaimer or teacher. A true prophet teaches divine revelations (truth), while a false prophet proclaims falsehoods. This broad definition has its roots in the Hebrew Scriptures and is shared by the Apostolic Fathers. A caveat with the Christian writers is that truth is defined in relation to Jesus as the Christ (Christological principle). This understanding of prophet connected with 1 Corinthians 14:37, 38; 15:1, 8, where Paul states that a true prophet must agree with him, since he saw the resurrected Christ, it is not hard to imagine how Irenaeus and others framed the gift of prophecy as subsumed by an apostolic ecclesiastical authority who maintained the true reading of the Hebrew Scriptures. Again, this is not the fully formed doctrine of apostolic succession of bishops as developed in the medieval Catholic Church, but the beginning of it. GOP 213.1

This conception of a tradition of truth that is carried out throughout history from the time of Jesus is also argued, in an opposite mirror image, by A. G. Daniells, who rejects the appointed bishops and approved itinerant prophets as divine messengers. A few observations are needed regarding his affirmation of the existence of the gift of prophecy after the New Testament time. In chapters 17-19 Daniells provides a historical description of postapostolic Christianity, affirming that the gift of prophecy was looked down on by mainstream ecclesiastical authorities because truth was confined to hierarchical and ultimately "infallible interpreters of the Scriptures, and the only source through which added light might come to the church." 24A. G. Daniells, The Abiding Gift of Prophecy (Boise, Idaho: Pacific Press®, 2011), 122, 127. This concurs with our analysis of the ancient sources. Given this caveat, apostolic succession in its early phase

(second century) was related to a Christological interpretation of the Scriptures, and was a hermeneutical choice that Daniells seemed to uphold. GOP 213.2

One of the deficiencies <sup>25Another</sup> concept closely associated with his assumption that those who proclaim to have the Spirit did so may be his broad definition of the gift of prophecy throughout his work. Sometimes it is a foreteller of the future, but most of the instances in this historical section (chaps, 17-19) are itinerant preachers that sometimes work wonders. This loose definition concurs with the New Testament use of this term. The problem is not the broad definition per se but how Daniells applies it to historical figures, which exceeds the characterization of Scripture. A line of succession of those who had the gift of prophecy is not necessary in order to have current truth, because our source of truth resides in the Scriptures. This is exactly what Daniells, and later L. E. Froom, was trying to argue in applying this broad definition of a prophet. However, is this a modified version of apostolic succession they are attacking? of Daniells' work is that he is too quick to assume affinity with any Christian figure at odds with Rome. Since there were individuals who claimed to have the Spirit, "this furnished impressive evidence that the Christian church of the second century [and consequently for the rest of history] was still endowed with spiritual gifts such as had been bestowed upon the apostles and their converts in the first century." <sup>26Daniells, 120</sup>. Although Paul instructs his congregation to not quench the Spirit (1 Thess. 5:20), false prophets that were wandering into the churches needed to be exposed. Unlike Cyprian's reaction toward the "prophetess," Daniells was not prone to quickly shun those who claim to be prophets. Notice his evaluation of Novatian: <sup>27</sup>Novatianism was a movement begun by Novatian, a Roman priest who, around the year A.D. 251, opposed the election of Cornelius as the new bishop of Rome under the accusation that he easily accepted the lapsi, those who had denied Christianity during persecution and performed pagan rituals in conformity to Rome. Although considered heretics by the bishop of Rome, they considered themselves kataroi, the pure ones. GOP 213 3

Novatian showed the courage to break away from the professing Christian church, the crisis was on, and thousands took their stand with these Reformers. Truly he was led of God. GOP 214.1

It was such courageous loyalty to the teachings of Christ and the

apostles that kept the channel open for the manifestation of the prophetic gift. It should likewise be remembered that a succession of the Novatians under different names continued till the Reformation of the sixteenth century. <sup>28Daniells</sup>, 131, 132. The official summary of the beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, in the section about the gift of prophecy in history, states, "No complete records of what occurred throughout the Christian era are available" (Seventh-day Adventists Believe, 260). Is this at odds with Daniells' effort in the Abiding Gift to provide a line of prophets throughout Christian history? Daniells' work is not referred to in this work. GOP

Similarly, Daniells argues that Montanism, Donatism, and the Waldensians<sup>29</sup>Though we do not know a lot about the Montanists, the followers of Montanus of Frigia, they were known for their commitment to prophecy as an active gift, having two female prophets. Since Tertullian favored them and also favored a rigorist ethic, it is assumed that they shared his ethical strictness. We know almost nothing of their doctrines, so it is easier to name them schismatics than heretics, except that through their prophecy they seem to support a different source of truth than the Irenean apostolic church model. We know more about Novatian and his teaching because we have an extant theological work written by him. It does not contain doctrinal differences that would make him appear heretical in his time. This schism seems to be more about who is in charge than about what is believed. The Donatists, who broke with the universal church over the election of Caecillius as metropolitan bishop of Carthage during the Diocletian persecution in the first decade of the fourth century, did not originally have any doctrinal differences with the catholics. Even when Augustine was calling them to return to the universal church, nearly a century later, he did not suggest any doctrinal or even liturgical changes that would be necessary before they could come back. Concerning the Waldensians. it is reasonable to see that through the centuries there were various independent groups that inhabited the difficult-to-govern mountainous areas of modern northern Italy, but it is questionable whether they should be linked with the Waldensians of more recent times. Whether or not the current Waldensians are viewed as having their roots in the biblical preaching movement of Peter Valdez in the twelfth century, it seems overly hopeful to assert their continuance from the seventh century on. A question that needs to be asked concerning the historiography of all these groups is whether it is prudent to strive to find a continuous line of people with truth to combat an apostolic succession of bishops holding a false truth. Where does truth reside? In the church or in the revealed Word of God? The attempt fails because the identified groups didnot have major

doctrinal differences with the established church, which is understood to have false doctrine. all had the gift of the spirit because they broke away from the professed Christian church (Rome). The dangerin this methodology is to create a neat dichotomy of truth and error between the teachings of what became the Roman Catholic Church (false) and these para-ecclesiastical movements (true). Evaluating all of them in light of the "movement," which in orthodox Adventist language is not a compliment. <sup>30Rice, 638</sup>. However, he later describes Montanism as a movement with a " burning desire for spiritual renewal. "Scriptures, Protestants, and later Adventists, have both agreed and disagreed with them. They had their epiphanies and downfalls. Montanists, Novatians, and Waldensians were not all correct, but neither was the Roman Catholic Church all wrong. George Rice in his historiographical review of the gift of prophecy in the Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology captures this tension. He first labels Montanism as "the church's first neo-Pentecostal movement." "The goal of its early adherents was to restore the church to its primitive simplicity. to experience again the *charismata* (spiritual gifts), and to have the assurance of the presence and guidance of the Paraclete or Holv Spirit "31lbid. Although Rice gives a more negative description of the gift of prophecy in history, Daniells' work is more positive in tracing the gift of prophecy from the time of the New Testament to Ellen G. White. Seventh-day Adventists Believe is more neutral in acknowledging the possibility of its manifestation, but affirms that since the year A.D. 300 (arbitrarily?) scant information is available. something worthy of emulation. GOP 214.3

Both Daniells' and Rice's history of the gift of prophecy exemplifies how this spiritual gift has been understood in Seventh-day Adventism. Adventism attempts to balance the biblical warnings of the existence of false prophets in the last days with the Scriptures' witness to the continuity of this spiritual gift, as promised in *Joel 2:28*, *29*, in Acts, *1 Corinthians 12*, and *Revelation 12:17* and *19:10*, which is not an easy task. This is similar to what we refer above about J.N.D. Kelly's analysis of the early church construction of the "rule of faith," that the solution against falsehood is a hermeneutical choice that will set the parameters of evaluating truth. <sup>32See note</sup> <sup>17</sup>·GOP 215.1

# Who Received Which Spirit?

Despite the major aforementioned trend in Christianity set by Irenaeus and Cyprian, of experiencing God's voice through the church, certain Christians claimed to have had intimate experiences with God through his Spirit. 33This narrative is based on Jereslav Pelikan, The Growth of Medieval Theology, The Christian Tradition—A History of Development of Doctrine (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 3:303-<sup>307.</sup> Although Thomas Aguinas (c.1225-1274) would stress the role of the rituals (sacraments) in the Christian experience of the divine and would place the beatific vision of all believers to the end of times, when God would become all in all, some were more prone to presence of God intimately. experience the Confessions may have played a major role in the articulation of this desire, who in turn was influenced by Christian forms of asceticism. Similar to all who claim to have had the spirit of God was an intense passion to be with God and eliminate sinful desires. A theology of experience informed by Matthew 5:8, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God," applied biblical characteristics of a prophet to Christians outside the hierarchy of the church. Similar to Moses, the prophet par excellence, they would see God and be led bv his Spirit. GOP 215.2

This individualistic experience with the divine, instead of a mediated one, would foment groups that sought the presence of God outside the control of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Movements such as the Franciscans, Dominicans, and later the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) had founders who claimed to have had visions from God and a desire to reform the church through a more personal connection with the Spirit. Because of their main doctrinal agreement with the Western church, they were slowly assimilated and used by the Papacy for less-than-noble goals, such as the persecution of those who disagreed with them. However, not all who were open to the influence of the divine spirit were in conformity with the doctrines of the church. This quest for a direct experience with God was indirectly a move away from depending on the bishops to obtain divine favor. This desire for spiritual renewal led individuals and groups to point out the sins of the hierarchical structure of Christianity and spark the Reformation with its emphasis on

personal faith in God. <sup>34A</sup> side note that requires further elaboration in this narrative (not mentioned by Pelikan) is the Jewish postexilic mystic roots of these Christian movements of spiritual renewal. See Gershom Scholem, Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism (New York: Schocken Books, 1995), also Scholem, The Messianic Idea in Judaism and Other Essays on Jewish Spirituality (New York: Schocken Books, 1995). Scholem provides an impressive analysis of how this idea of direct contact with God shaped Second Temple Judaism and Christianity. The major characteristic of this religious trend noted by Scholem is eschatology, or the expectation of the soon coming of the Messiah (kingdom of God) and the end of evil. This hope of the end fostered a sentiment of indifference with the status quo, thus creating reform movements. The similarities in practices and beliefs between Qumran, early Christian asceticism, and Adventism are not a coincidence. They were eschatological movements with a strong emphasis on purity (rituals) and the belief of the indwelling of the divine spirit in its practitioners. *GOP 216 1* 

Influenced by the sociology of religion and anthropology methodologies, studies on charismatic figures in Christianity have used the word "mystic" to describe the experience of those who saw God and received a message from the divine spirit. This is similar to a definition of the spiritual gift of prophecy previously delineated. Based on this definition, popular articles on Christian mysticism, one found in Wikipedia. such as 35https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian mysticism (accessed Aug. 30, 2015). provide an intriguing list of "mystics." Ellen White and A. W. Tozer are considered Christian mystics in the modern era; Ignatius of Loyola, Teresa of Avila, and George Fox as premodern examples: and Julian of Norwich and Hildegard of Bingen as Middle Age cases of intimate experience with the Spirit of God. The list is comprehensive and allows for a continual presence of the gift of prophecy in history, as A. G. Daniells argued. However, the generality of this list is obvious, because under the definition of mysticism—those who saw God—basically any Christian who claims to have experienced a spiritual feeling through prayer, meditation, vision, or dreams can be characterized as a mystic or, further, as a prophet. This is also the problem with A. G. Daniells' study. Although some biblical prophets are clearly mystics, not all mystical experiences are necessarily prophetic. <sup>36A simple distinction</sup> exists based on the Hebrew words to describe a visionary (roeh, chozer) and a proclaimer of divine words (nabi), captured well in Seventh-day Adventists Believe, 248, 249. Although a prophet such as Daniel may well have received visions of heavenly beings, David may not have had such experiences, and yet he still proclaimed divine messages through psalms. However, one concept can be transferred to the other and create difficulty in identifying a prophet. GOP 216.2

Aside from the biblical tension of the false versus the true prophet, in a postmodern evaluation of the gift of prophecy (in the study of religion) the more general category of experiencing supernatural ignored. 37The denial of supernatural he cannot manifestations led Ronald Numbers to evaluate Ellen G. White's experiences (visions and dreams), not as prophetic, but as a social phenomenon only. Ronald L. Numbers, Prophetess of Health: A Study of Ellen G. White (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), xxxiii. See response in Leonard Brand and Don S. McMahon, The Prophet and Her Critics: A Striking New Analysis Refutes the Charges That Ellen G. White "Borrowed" the Health Message (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press®. <sup>2005).</sup> The difficulty or tension is real and crucial for understanding the manifestation of spiritual gifts, including that of prophecy. We must cultivate an attitude of openness and suspicion: openness because the Scriptures and daily experience tell us that spiritual manifestations are real but suspicion because the Scriptures and daily experience also reveal the ambivalent characteristics in those who claim to have a divine spirit. We should always ask, Who received which spirit? GOP 217.1

The parameter of evaluation is a hermeneutical choice, and ours is conformity to what we deem a correct reading of the Scriptures (both the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament). Tests such as (a) conformity to previous divine revelation (*Deut.* 13:1-5; *Isa.* 8:20; 1 *Cor.* 14:28-15:8), (b) fulfilled predictions (*Deut.* 18:21, 22; *Jer.* 28:9), (c) righteous behavior (*Matt.* 7:15-20), and (d) confessing Jesus as the messianic Son of God who became flesh (1 *John* 4:1-6) are clearly laid out in the Scriptures. Although visions and dreams can certainly be part of the prophetic experience, they are not always the case, and thus not a mandatory characteristic of this gift. Even the tests in Scripture are sometimes not clear. <sup>38Rice</sup> also concurs that isolating characteristics laid out in the Scriptures are not absolute proof that someone is a prophet (Rice, 619, 630). For example, what is conformity to previous divine revelation? Paul and his understanding of

circumcision is a case in which biblical law seems to be abrogated by new revelation. For was not circumcision clearly stated in the Torah and the Prophets that it was a perpetual sign between God and Israel? What about the test of fulfilled prediction? Did not Jonah foretell that Nineveh would be destroyed in 40 days, and it wasn't? 39A classical Adventist response to this is the differentiation between classical and apocalyptic prophecy, or conditional and nonconditional predictions. Rice uses this argument to affirm that this test (fulfilled predictions) is not a fixed one in determining the legitimacy of a divine prophet (630) The test of righteous behavior can also be a tricky one. We surely have good people who are not prophets (Mother Teresa) and prophets who did not behave well (e.g., David). The biblical test for identifying Jesus as the incarnate Christ seems to be a more reliable test, but even this can be a complex issue. 40What does it mean to declare Jesus as the incarnated Messiah? Roman Catholic dogma also confesses that Jesus is God incarnated, but their view of God, incarnation, and its benefits to humanity (soteriology) stand in stark contrast to ours (Seventh-day Adventists Believe, 254). For more on the divide between the Roman Catholic doctrine of God and Adventist understanding. see Fernando Luis Canale, "Doctrine of God," in Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology, 105-139. GOP 217 2

All this serves as a warning against human overconfidence that applies both to those who claim to be prophets and those observing it. As Jeremiah recognized, the heart of man is deceitful (Jer. 17:9, also Rom. 7:14, 15). Therefore, we need the mind of Christ given by His Spirit to identify truth from error (1 Cor. 2:10-16). Considering this, in our concluding section we adopt the broad definition of a prophet based on the New Testament and Apostolic Fathers. spokespersons of God who have been called directly by God. They may or may not have received a vision/dream or an ecstatic experience like Ezekiel, John, and Ellen White. When sufficient information is not available regarding a given subject, we should not hastily judge such persons as false or true prophets, but leave the possibilities open. When sufficient information is given about people who claim to have had a special encounter with the spiritual, we should evaluate their lives and teachings based on the Scriptures. Based on conformity to the Bible as the norm to evaluate new prophets, we conclude our narrative of the spiritual gift of prophecy in the Middle Ages. GOP 217.3

# **Prophetic Voices? Spiritual Manifestations in the Middle Ages**

Around the year 1175 a Benedictine monk from Gembloux, a Flemish city in modern-day Belgium, wrote a letter to his friend about an abbess who had received visions. His testimony sheds light on the Christian perception, in the Middle Ages, of the gift of prophecy. Guibert of Gembloux was so impressed about the reports of her experiences and teachings that he traveled approximately 180 miles to Bingen, modern Germany, in order to meet Hildegard. He compared her to the Hebrew prophets Miriam, Deborah, and Judith. "Surely she had received 'rare gifts, till now practically unheard of throughout all ages, " 41Guibert of Gembloux, Epistle 164, in Analecta Sacra, ed. Jean-Baptiste Pitra (Monte Cassino, 1882), 8:576. In Barbara Newman, "Hildegard of Bingen: Visions and Validations," Church History 54 (1985): 163. For Guibert, since the virgin Mary no women had received so great a gift from God. In his perception God had not sent a prophet for more than 1,000 years. This reflects the previously explained tendency. However, his testimony also demonstrates that certain Christians were open to the possibility of the manifestation of prophecy in their time. GOP 218.1

Hildegard of Bingen (c. 1098-1179) was not the only one at the time who claimed to have received revelations from God and was regarded as a prophet by certain contemporaries. Elisabeth, an abbess from Schonau, 63 miles from Bingen, had similar experiences. <sup>42</sup>Newman, 173. For more on Elisabeth's experience in relation to Hildegard and another visionary, Rupert of Deutz, see Newman, 173-175. Barbara Newman, a specialist on the life of Hildegard, quotes a testimony even earlier than the one given by Guibert: *GOP 218.2* 

In 1158 the author of the Annales Palidenses found it natural to link the two visionary nuns in a single notice: "In these days also God displayed the signs of his power in the frail sex, that is, in his two handmaidens Hildegard on the Rupertsberg near Bingen and Elisabeth in Schonau, whom he filled with the spirit of prophecy and to whom, through the Gospel, he revealed many kinds of visions which are extant in writing." 43Annales Palidenses (A.D. 1158), in Monumenta Germaniae Histórica: Scriptores (Berlin, 1826), 16:90. In Newman, 173. GOP 218.3

However, this recognition was not easily acquired. In a letter written by Elisabeth to Hildegard, it is told that her abbot at first doubted the visions, commanding her to ask the supposed divine angel who talked with her if he was from God. He feared that Elisabeth was actually talking with a demon. She continues her account that in the next appearance, the angel turned his face away from her in anger, commanding the abbot to repent from his doubt. Apparently he did repent, for he sought divine guidance from this visionary woman, asking Elisabeth to pray in his behalf when he was planning a preaching tour. <sup>44</sup>Newman, 174, 175. Asking a supernatural being their identity can be a tricky thing, for according to the Scriptures, demons deceive humans by saying they are from God (e.g., Saul and the medium of En-dor in 1 Sam. 28; Eze. 13; Matt. 4:1-11; 2 Cor. 11:13-15). Fortunately, the abbot was open to the possibility of divine revelation, and apparently no motive was given to discredit its divine origin. *GOP 218.4* 

Hildegard also encountered struggles with her male superiors. Her abbot once confronted her about the body of a lapsi that was buried in the cemetery of the monastery. He wanted to take the corpse out because he was an apostate who had not confessed his sins to him. She defied her superior, saying that the man had confessed his sins before his death, putting herself in an authoritative role like a bishop. In another instance she requested her abbot Kuno to move the nuns to another place and have a monastery of their own, but he disallowed it. She then bypassed his authority, seeking superior permission from the archbishop of Mainz, which she received. In a male-dominated world, it was not easy to claim to be a divine messenger. Despite the difficulties they faced, both stories "offer a classic case of the triumph of charismatic over institutional authority." 45lbid., 175. As Newman concludes, this attitude of defiance was a rare case of audacity in a world dominated by a male ecclesiastical hierarchy. 46As Newman shows, the confrontation here was not about male-female headship, since Hildegard assumes it. Hildegard described that God had to imbue her with a virile spirit since no man stood up for the truth in her age, which shows the assumption that the preferred gender for divine revelation was male. For Newman, the fact she was the frail sex gave even more authority to her call (174). GOP 219.1

Hildegard's conviction of her call led her even further, to denounce

hierarchical shortcomings. Similar to what Huss and Luther would later do, in her preaching tours she accused the priesthood of corruption because of simony, the habit of buying and selling church offices 47Rosemary Radford Ruether, Visionary Women: Three Medieval Mystics (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002), 28, 29. She not only preached and admonished the church's leadership of their sins, but was also sought for guidance. Many considered her a divine voice that should be heard. Hildegard at first did not write about her spiritual experiences (visions). Even when she did, in response to Guibert's inquiry about them, she was careful to note that hers were not an ecstatic rapture, but a special grace of divine perception. 48Newman, 166, 167 Her writings did not emphasize the supernatural encounters she claimed to have had with God, but were an exposition of biblical passages. Newman notices that in her writings she only quotes from the Scriptures and the voice of God she heard, for book learning (human opinion) was trivial compared to the light she had received. <sup>49</sup>Ibid., 170; Everett Ferguson, Church History: From Christ to the Pre-Reformation, Church History: The Rise and Growth of the Church in Its Cultural, Intellectual, and Political Context (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013), 457. GOP 219.2

She had seen that Light since her childhood. <sup>50</sup>Ferguson says she was 8 when her first vision occurred (457); Evelyn Underhill, The Mystics of the Church (Pennsylvania: Morehouse, 1925), 77, thinks she was 3. She was later placed in a convent where she became an abbess in 1136, about 39 years of age. There she continued to see this divine light. She initially could not understand nor explain the gift of her visions to others. She did not share their content until 1141, when presumably God told her to write them down. She was hesitant, became ill, but later succumbed to the voice. <sup>51</sup>Newman, 167. Hildegard also affirmed that because of her sick status, God could dwell with her—a feeling of dependence. She viewed her weak gender and health as an opportunity to show the power of God (1 Cor. 2), similar to the experience of Ellen White. Ellen G. White, Testimonies for the Church (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press®, 1948), 1:9-13, 58-61, 71-74. GOP 220.1

But I, though I saw and heard these things, refused to write for a long time through doubt and bad opinion and the diversity of human

words, not with stubbornness but in the exercise of humility, until, laid low by the scourge of God, I fell upon a bed of sickness; then, compelled at last by many illnesses, and by the witness of a certain noble maiden of good conduct [the nun Richardis von Stade] and of that man whom I had secretly sought and found, as mentioned above [Volmar], I set my hand to the writing. While I was doing it, I sensed, as I mentioned before, the deep profundity of scriptural exposition; and, raising myself from illness by the strength I received, I brought this work to a close—though just barely—in ten years. . . . And I spoke and wrote these things not by the invention of my heart or that of any other person, but as by the secret mysteries of God I heard and received them in the heavenly places. And again I heard a voice from Heaven saying to me, "Cry out therefore, and write thus!" 52Hildegard von Bingen, Scivias, trans. Mother Columbia Hart and Jane Bishop (New York: Paulist Press, 1990), 60, 61. See Ellen G. White, A Sketch of the Christian Experience and Views of Ellen G. White (Saratoga Springs, N.Y.: James White, 1851), 5-8. GOP 220 2

As a result of her encounters with God she wrote Scivias (Know way of God]), Liber Vitae Meritorum (book of the [the merits/rewards of life) and Divinorum Operum (book of divine works). These books reveal the work of God in the salvation of man where she expounds on Creation, the Fall, and the sacraments of the church. In addition, she wrote about botany and medicine. 53Her medical works are not related to her visions, but are based on her experience with a garden (herbs) and caring for the sick. Based on her writings, she believed that all things were created by God (Gen. 1) to be used by humans for their benefit. Because of Creation, a vital connection exists between nature and the human body: health should be treated wholistically. She notably used the fourelement divisions of the Greeks (earth, fire, air, water) to describe nature. poetry, and composed music for liturgical purposes. In her book about the rewards of life she reflects on the immorality of her age influenced by the devil and frames her admonition to live a pure life based on the biblical prescriptions of holiness. She also wrote a play with this same moral emphasis, the Ordo Virtutum (about the order of virtues). GOP 220.3

The emphasis of her work is the Light of God. She even describes her experience as the "reflection of the living Light." Relying primarily on the Genesis account of Creation and its reuse by John

1, she mirrors Augustine's commentary on Genesis and his metaphorical use of the lights of heaven illuminating the planet to explain the truth from God that bring life to the human soul. 54Newman elaborates more on this use of the light language and her likely use of Augustine in 167, 168. Using this biblical language of divine light and darkness she considered herself a witness of this greater light. God is also described as having the attributes of a woman who gives life. Using the biblical portrayal of God with feminine terms such as Wisdom (*sapientia*) and Love (*caritas*), she emphasized the compassionate and creative action of the divine Light. *GOP* 220.4

Based on her writings and contemporary descriptions of her work, she sometimes foretold the future, constantly proclaimed Jesus as God's incarnate Son, lived a life of purity, denouncing the corruption of the clergy (fruits) in conformity to biblical parameters. Based on these criteria, she could be considered a prophet. However, caution should be exercised in agreeing with all she presumably wrote, as some of her teachings could be considered at odds with scriptural teachings. The test of Isaiah 8:20, conformity to previous revelation, is pertinent here. Although she professed basic Christian doctrines, denounced corruptions in the clergy, as a woman of her age she was also in favor of the mystical power of the Eucharist and the divine authority of the church. GOP 221.1

A notice of caution is necessary before we dismiss her case as a valid divine messenger. Biblical examples show that not all men and women of God were perfect. Hebrews 11 includes murderers (Moses and David), those disobedient to God's call (Moses and Samson), and other unrighteous individuals. We should also consider how in *The Great Controversy* Ellen G. White upholds Wycliffe, Luther, Calvin, and Miller as divine emissaries, proclaimers of truth bringing divine light to a generation in darkness. Nonetheless, not all their actions and writings are praiseworthy or in conformity to divine precepts. Hildegard may well have been used by God to initiate certain reforms in the church. *GOP 221.2* 

Another case may illustrate this point. In an age in which God was considered by many to be a judgmental tyrant, the image of a compassionate God was truly divine light. Julian of Norwich (c. 1342-14??), similar to Hildegard of Bingen, also wrote a theology of

optimism and compassion. This English anchorite, a hermit living in a fixed cloister, taught that God was love and not wrath. Balancing the medieval stress on law, duty, priestly mediation, and suffering, which led Martin Luther to despair, she proclaimed that sufferings are not necessarily a divine punishment and that Christians should seek God individually for salvation. *GOP 221.3* 

I understood this revelation to teach our souls to cling fast to the goodness of God. At the same time I remember all the different ways we are accustomed to pray and how busy we become when we lose sight of how God loves us. For I was persuaded at this time that what pleases God, what delights him most, is when we pray simply trusting in his goodness, holding on to him, relying upon his grace, with true understanding, rather than if we made all the means that heart can think. Even when we summon all such skills, we are bound to fall short: all we need do is trust in God's own goodness, for this will never fail us. <sup>55</sup>Julian of Norwich, Revelation of Love, ed. John Skinner (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 11. See Ellen Harmon's experience with the concept of a divine tyrant and how love changed her Christian experience in White, Testimonies for the Church, 1:21-34. GOP

For Julian, sinners must learn to depend on God, which leads to salvation. She also portrayed God with feminine traits to emphasize His compassionate and loving character. However, portraying the gift of prophecy is not so easy. The admonition of Christ reminds us that not all who call upon the name of the Lord are truly His. Because truth can be mixed with error, we should not readily approve Julian as a prophet and her visions as divine. In contrast to Hildegard, it is easier from the Scriptures to show the shortcomings of her theology. She repeatedly refers to visionary encounters with the virgin Mary and her role in the loving relationship between Jesus and humanity (intermediary) <sup>56</sup>Julian of Norwich, 8 (par. 4), 39, 40 (par. 18). and seems to understand sin as a human construct (not a state but a condition of present pain/suffering), <sup>571bid., 54, 55</sup> (par. 27). On pages 57, 58 (par. 29) Julian refers to "Adam's sin"; on page 78 (par. 40) she talks about the process of contrition for sin and the human effort to receive divine absolution. In the end she concludes that all human effort is of no avail since God is with humans all the time. She then uses the language of hell and purgatory to teach that sin brings suffering, but ends with the enigmatic phase "the soul knows no other hell but sin" (78 [par. 40]). As she negates the existence of sin as a thing, on pages 54, 55 (par. 27), she apparently negates the existence of purgatory and hell (as an entity), traditionally speaking, by her vague play on words. This gives an ambiguous character to her message. which has caused many to view her as a universalist. GOP 222.1

#### Conclusion

We have attempted to show in this chapter the trajectory of how the spiritual gift of prophecy was perceived by major Christian writers. The prophetic gift was identified most commonly with the Hebrew Scriptures because its writers proclaimed the truth of Jesus as the Christ of God. So, the basic meaning of a prophet derived from this Christological hermeneutic in early Christianity was of a divine spokesperson. *GOP* 222.2

Since many claimed to have this spiritual gift of prophecy, teaching opposing things about Jesus, the Apostolic Fathers recognized the need to distinguish between true and false manifestations of this spiritual gift. There was also a move toward assimilating the role of prophet into that of a local bishop. This seems a natural step because in the New Testament the roles of a prophet, apostle, and teacher somewhat overlap. First Irenaeus then Cyprian made this move complete when they argued for the importance of apostolic succession in order to distinguish truth from error and maintain divine authority within the church. After them the gift of prophecy is rarely mentioned, except when referring to the Hebrew Scriptures. So, prophets were largely a thing of the past by the Middle Ages. GOP 222.3

Because of this control by the official church of truth and salvation, some have perceived apostolic succession in the Middle Ages as an apostolic succession of error. These errors created in many a felt need to find an alternative apostolic succession of truth, through a continual line of prophetic voices in opposition to the organized church. Ironically, this construct was not needed because truth resides not in ecclesiastical structures but in the revealed word of God. *GOP* 222.4

Nevertheless, these human developments do not hinder the possibility of the manifestation of the prophetic gift in history. In Christianity there were voices claiming to have had the spirit of prophecy. <sup>58In</sup> the same period, Jews and Muslims also claimed to have received special revelations from God (see McGinn, "Mystical Union in Judaism, Christianity and Islam," Encyclopedia of Religion 9. 6338-6340) Sometimes these prophets taught things that were apparently forgotten by

certain Christian communities, thus bringing them back toward divine revelation. At other times they spoke contrary to what was taught in the Scriptures. The complexity of this history is that both characterizations can be exemplified at times in the same individual. Similar to Peter in his experience confessing Christ and engaging the devil at the same moment, we should be aware that divine messengers are human. Like all of us, they fail. This is not a comfortable position when false spirits need to be identified. *GOP* 222.5

In our evaluation, Kelly's insight about the reaction of Irenaeus to false prophecy still applies to our time. The identification of a true spirit is based on a hermeneutical choice. <sup>59See</sup> above, footnote 17. We, the observers, must have parameters in order to separate truth from falsehood, mindful of the frail human component in the gift of prophecy. We suggest that as Bible-believing Christians, Adventists should cultivate a spirit of openness to new revelation, always comparing the messages of those who call themselves divine messengers with previous revelation in an attitude of love, recognizing that sometimes the divine gift of prophecy is not so clearly distinguished from the false one. 60Adding to the complexity of divine revelation, we see in the Scriptures a diverse expression of religious experiences and divine modes of communication. According to James Dunn, the canonization of the New Testament by the Christian church showed not only its diversity, but more importantly its "acceptable diversity." Dunn, "Has the Canon a Continuing Function?" in The Canon Debate, eds. McDonald and Sanders (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2002), 578. GOP 223 1

At times when both biblical prophetic literature and Ellen G. White's writings are used to reach different and even opposing conclusions, Kelly's stress on the role of a hermeneutical framework to establish truth is crucial. Our response to the spiritual gift of prophecy must be shaped by Matthew 5:8: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Therefore it seems more appropriate to inquire, not only about the recipients of the "spirit of prophecy," but whether or not, as observers of it, our hearts are sufficiently clean to see God. 61We write sufficiently because according to Scriptures the human nature is sinful, which hinders the possibility of an understanding of divine revelation. This is only possible with an entire submission to the Spirit of God (see Jer. 17:5, 9,

10; 1 Cor. 2:9-16). Do we have the right spirit? GOP 223.2

# **Chapter 11 - The Reformers and the Gift of Prophecy**

## Denis Fortin

As mentioned in other chapters in this book, Seventh-day Adventists believe the gift of prophecy is an identifying mark of the end-time remnant people of God. In the introduction to Ellen White's book *Patriarchs and Prophets*, in 1890, Uriah Smith, then editor of the *Review and Herald*, stated, "A number of clear and explicit prophecies [*Acts 2:17-21*; *1 Cor. 1:7*; *Rev. 12:17*; *19:10*] declare that in the last days there will be a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and that the church at the time of Christ's appearing will have had, during its closing experience, 'the testimony of Jesus,' which is the spirit of prophecy." <sup>1</sup>Uriah Smith, "Introduction," in Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets (Oakland: Pacific Press®, 1890), [20]. GOP 224.1

Adventists understand this end-time manifestation of the gift of prophecy in conjunction with a belief in the perpetuity of the spiritual gifts mentioned in Paul's epistles (*Rom. 12:6-8; 1 Cor. 12:4-11, 27-31; Eph. 4:11*). These gifts are meant to benefit the church from the time of the apostles until the second coming of Christ (*Eph. 4:12, 13*). *GOP 224.2* 

It is this aspect of the perpetuity of the gift of prophecy that this chapter will address from the perspective of the Protestant Reformers of the sixteenth century. The chapter will explore what the Reformers said about spiritual gifts, visions, and the gift of prophecy in their midst, and it will be obvious that the Reformers came to a very different conclusion than Uriah Smith. A hundred years after Ellen White's death some of the Reformers' thoughts on spiritual gifts raise some new challenges to the Adventist understanding of the meaning of the gift of prophecy. GOP 224.3

## The Gift of Prophecy During the Reformation

According to Diane Watt: "Throughout the medieval and early modern periods, women and men of all social ranks and levels of education declared themselves to be prophets and visionaries inspired by God to proclaim His, or sometimes Her, message to the people. The substance of such divine revelations might be doctrinal, soteriological, apocalyptic, millenarian or chiliastic, orthodox or heretical, entirely religious or also political." <sup>2Diane Watt, Secretaries of</sup> God: Women Prophets in Late Medieval and Early Modern England (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1997), 2. The manifestation of prophetic revelations in such cases took various forms. Some were prophets as spokespersons for God or on behalf of God and sometimes in the popular sense predicted the future; some were mystics and attained a special communion with God and those whose revelations were concerned with the way of perfection while others were visionaries and received revelations of transcendent realities. <sup>3lbid., 3.</sup>In France. England, Germany, the Netherlands, and Switzerland, these individuals endowed with such a gift of prophecy "believed that they were called to utter a divine message and witness to the world." 4lbid., 163. GOP 224 4

Catholic and Protestant visionaries were common during the period of the Reformation. <sup>5See</sup> Niels Christian Hvidt, Christian Prophecy: The Post-Biblical Tradition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Kirsi Stjerna, Women and the Reformation (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2009); and Watt.. Yet all Magisterial Reformers of the sixteenth century rejected the manifestation of prophetic dreams and visions in their midst and did not consider themselves as endowed with such a supernatural gift of prophecy. For them the gift of prophecy was no longer needed after the end of the writing of the New Testament. In part, what led them to this conclusion was the abuse and fanaticism experienced by some followers of the Reformation, in particular the followers of Thomas Muntzer, the Zwickau Prophets, and the Spiritualists of St. Gall. *GOP* 225.1

#### **Martin Luther**

In 1521-1522 while Martin Luther was in hiding at Wartburg Castle,

after his defiance of the emperor at Worms in April 1521, Andreas Karlstadt and other associates of Luther attempted to implement in Wittenberg some of the changes he had started with his new theology. Some of these innovations included the celebration of the Lord's Supper under both kinds without references to sacrifice, the real presence of Christ, and the removal of images in churches. Some of these changes led to episodes of fanaticism, which in turn led Luther to distance himself from these reforms. *GOP* 225.2

At first a friend and devoted ally of Luther, Karlstadt soon became a bitter foe, and when Luther abruptly returned to Wittenberg in March 1522, he reversed most of the reforms Karlstadt had initiated in his absence. <sup>6Ronald J. Sider, "Introduction," in Ronald J. Snider, ed., Karlstadt's Battle With Luther: Documents in a Liberal-Radical Debate (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978), 1-4. As part of his rhetoric against Karlstadt, Luther accused his former friend of exhibiting the same spirit of fanaticism as seen in Thomas Muntzer and the Zwickau Prophets; in particular, Luther took issue with the claim that these reformers received direct visions from God and heard "the living voice of God." Although Karlstadt strongly denied the claim that he received visions from God, Luther did not change his mind about his former friend, and classified him as a heretic and fanatic. *GOP* 225.3</sup>

Connected with Thomas Muntzer in Zwickau in 1521, the Zwickau Prophets fled to Wittenberg in December 1521. They rejected infant baptism, claimed direct revelations from God, and advocated the use of force against the godless. Many historians claim that they significantly influenced Karlstadt in the reforms he advocated during Luther's absence; however, the evidence is not conclusive. In any case, their appeal to visions and revelation apart from the Word of God was a position inimical to Luther's sola Scriptura and was perceived as belittling biblical authority. <sup>7lbid., 41, note 7</sup>. GOP 225.4

Written in December 1524 and January 1525, "Against the Heavenly Prophets" was Luther's most vigorous attack against Karlstadt and the Zwickau Prophets. Even though Karlstadt attempted repeatedly to distance himself from the unorthodox revelations and practices of the Zwickau Prophets, Luther continued to identify Karlstadt with the group. <sup>8lbid., 92-125.</sup> Twelve years later, in his Smalcald articles of 1537, Luther still clearly rejected any

manifestation of new divine revelations beyond what is already given in the Bible, at least as he saw it. For Luther, Radical Reformers taught that people should seek God outside of the Bible. looking instead to their inner feelings, thoughts, and other so-called spiritual experiences. All these manifestations were suspect as they replaced the Word of God as the sole authority in matters of faith. "In issues relating to the spoken, outward Word," he wrote, "we must firmly hold that God grants His Spirit or grace to no one except through or with the preceding outward Word. This protects us from the enthusiasts (i.e., souls who boast that they have the Spirit without and before the Word). They judge Scripture or the spoken Word and explain and stretch it at their pleasure, as [Thomas] Munzer did." Luther also equated such new revelations with the unbiblical pronouncements of the papacy, which are "above and contrary to Scripture and the spoken Word." 9Martin Luther, The Smalcald Articles, part III, article VIII, "Confession," in Concordia: The Lutherar Confessions, gen. ed.Paul Timothy McCain, 2nd ed. (St. Louis: Concordia, 2006), 280. GOP 226.1

#### **Anabaptist Visionaries**

From the time of Thomas Muntzer's activities in Zwickau, and later the revolutionary incidents in Munster (February 1534 to June 1535), most radical reformation attempts at surpassing the reforms implemented by Luther became suspected of fanaticism. Although there was a broad distinction between various branches of Anabaptism, between its militant inclinations on the one hand and quietist tendencies on the other, any group inclined to extremism or to seek a deeper reformation was branded "Anabaptist." <sup>10Harry</sup> Loewen, Luther and the Radicals: Another Look at Some Aspects of the Struggle Between Luther and the Radical Reformers (Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier University, 1974), 21-23. Many separate communities, seeking not to provoke antagonism, were unfortunately associated with the more violent and apocalyptic segments of the movement. *GOP* 226.2

"The Protestants of Protestantism," as Roger Olson describes them, include three distinct subgroups: Anabaptists, spirituals (or spiritualists), and anti-Trinitarian rationalists. <sup>11Roger E. Olson, The</sup> Story of Christian Theology: Twenty Centuries of Tradition and Reform (Downers

Grove, III.: InterVarsity, 1999), 415. The largest and most influential group was the Anabaptists, who left a significant mark on Christian theology through leaders such as Balthasar Hubmaier and Menno Simons (whose name was kept by Mennonites). This group arose from Switzerland, the "Swiss Brethren," and from a simple statement of faith, the Schleitheim Articles, written in 1527. GOP 226.3

For Catholics who made little distinctions between "Lutheran" and "Anabaptist," the latter became a convenient label to suggest revolutionary intent against the monarchy. Since King Francis I of France believed his Protestants were Anabaptists, John Calvin set out to refute this claim by writing his first edition of the Institutes of the Christian Religion, which he began in 1535, the year after the Munster events. 12Geoffrey Treasure, The Huguenots (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2013), 48, 78. In every edition of his *Institutes*, Calvin mentioned his opposition to the Radical Reformers. As with Karlstadt—among Protestants—the Luther did "Anabaptist" became a catchall for people associated with the Protestant movement in separation from the state, and with visionary experiences in addition to the revelation of God's will in Scripture. But some charismatic Anabaptist leaders did believe in a quest for the New Jerusalem on earth. According to historian Geoffrey Treasure, among them "Melchior Hoffman sought to establish an alternative theological position to that of Luther. Churches were to be controlled by prophets; they in turn to be subject to 'apostolic messengers.' " 13lbid., 49. GOP 227.1

Melchior Hoffman began his ministry as a Lutheran evangelist, but Luther soon disowned him because of his apocalyptic spirituality and rejection of the Lord's Supper as a sacrament. Hoffman was given to an allegorical interpretation of Scripture and prophecy based on his studies, especially of the books of Daniel and Revelation. His belief in visions also confirmed to him that the end of the world was near. Hoffman's continuing interest in prophecy and the nearness of Christ's return was encouraged by the visions and dreams of some of his disciples, Leonhard and Ursula Jost, Barbara Rebstock, and others. These led him to believe Strasbourg would be the spiritual Jerusalem, and that he himself was Elijah

chosen to proclaim the coming event to all people. <sup>14Cornelius</sup> J. Dyck, An Introduction to Mennonite History: A Popular History of the Anabaptists and the Mennonites, 3rd ed. (Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1993), 97. *GOP* 

Some of Hoffman's disciples arrived in Munster, in north Germany, in 1534. There Jan Matthys found several preachers who agreed with him, and a new prophecy changed the location of the New Jerusalem to Munster. Another change was also resorting to violence. According to Mennonite historian Cornelius Dyck, "Hoffman had been peaceful and urged his followers to wait for God to set up his kingdom at the appointed time. The possibility of calling upon his faithful to help annihilate the wicked by force of arms was an option but only at Christ's return. Christ would give them the swords." But, in contrast, Matthys taught that the faithful were to prepare for the return of Christ and make a place for His kingdom by destroying the wicked. Everyone in Munster was soon forced to receive baptism and join the new community, or leave the city. Preparations were made for the ultimate battle against the wicked, but an army supported by the German princes finally took the city on June 24, 1535. <sup>15lbid., 99.</sup> See also Loewen's study of the events at Münster, Luther and the Radicals, 95-107. GOP 227.3

This sad episode gave a bad name to Anabaptists everywhere. All Anabaptists were now labeled as visionaries and revolutionaries, and therefore persecuted. It is in response to this situation and the confusion it caused that Luther and Calvin, and the Magisterial Reformation in general, took a strong position against Anabaptists and modern prophecies. It was also in response to these visionaries that the Reformers emphasized *sola Scriptura* as the only stable standard of doctrines. Since visionaries and personal revelations tended to produce fanaticism and confusion, the objective word of God in Scripture became even more the only standard of faith and practice. The surety and reliability of the Word of God provided a steadfast answer and rebuke to subjective visions and revelations. *GOP* 228.1

Yet the Anabaptist understanding of many beliefs is also shared by Seventh-day Adventists. Luther's belief in the priesthood of all believers was fully adopted by Anabaptists who understood that with the illumination of the Holy Spirit, Christians could by themselves understand the Scripture. Their understanding of ministry was more collegial and did not produce a sharp distinction between clergy and laity, as happened among Lutherans. Anabaptists accepted the perspicuity of Scripture in ways that Luther and the Magisterial Reformation did not foresee. Among some Anabaptists, accepting the principle of sola Scriptura led to a conviction in nuda Scriptura (nothing but Scripture), and the rejection of all constituted authority to give guidance in the interpretation of Scriptures. 16The definition of sola Scriptura has been a matter of debate in theological discussions. In this context the Magisterial Reformers did not understand sola Scriptura to mean the rejection of some historical documents, such as creeds, or decisions of some church councils, or the writings of some Church Fathers, such as Augustine, which they considered in harmony with the teachings of Scripture. Luther, for example, used the Apostles' Creed as the basis of a section in his Small and Large Catechisms, and Calvin often quoted from Augustine and other Church Fathers to support his conclusions. Anabaptists, however, categorically refused to use any such documents to guide their interpretation of Scripture or to determine if it is in harmony with earlier Christian thought. Such an approach to the Scriptures gave way to strong individualism and consequently to the rejection of all secular and religious authorities that deny the possibility of the manifestation of some spiritual gifts. Early Adventists accepted this approach to Scripture and spiritual gifts. 17The following comment by Ellen White in The Great Controversy is closer in thought and intention to the Anabaptist view of nuda Scriptura than to the Magisterial Reformers' view: "But God will have a people upon the earth to maintain the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines and the basis of all reforms. The opinions of learned men, the deductions of science, the creeds or decisions of ecclesiastical councils, as numerous and discordant as are the churches which they represent, the voice of the majority—not one nor all of these should be regarded as evidence for or against any point of religious faith. Before accepting any doctrine or precept, we should demand a plain 'Thus saith the Lord' in its support" (The Great Controversy [Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press®, 1911], 595). Today, however, Adventists are closer in theology and practice to the Magisterial Reformers' view of sola Sscriptura than to the Anabaptists' nuda Scriptura. Adventists now regularly use historical and theological documents from Christian and Adventist authors, including Ellen White's writings, to guide their interpretation of Scripture or to determine if it is in

#### John Calvin

John Calvin, like his predecessors, gave ultimate authority to the Word of God as the only (sola) reliable source of beliefs and doctrines. Likewise, he also rejected the claim that Christians could find the will of God apart from Scripture, in spiritual revelations and visions. Radical Reformers and Anabaptists who claimed access to the Spirit were thus suspect. <sup>18However, by 1544</sup> it seems that Calvin was able to make a distinction among various branches of the Radical Reformation and Anabaptist thought. His most direct argument against the Anabaptists, the Treatise Against the Anabaptists, did not make any reference to visionary experiences or special revelations; Calvin simply commented on the Schleitheim Confession of 1527. See John Calvin, Treatises Against the Anabaptists and Against the Libertines, translation, introduction, and notes by Benjamin Wirt Farley (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1982). For Calvin the comparison was exclusive: one could not believe in Scripture and believe in extra biblical revelations; to believe in visions and revelations was tantamount to rejecting the Word of God. GOP 229.1

In the last edition of his Institutes of the Christian Religion, in the section on how the principles of piety are subverted by fanatics who substitute personal revelations for Scripture, Calvin stated, "Those who, rejecting Scripture, imagine that they have some peculiar way of penetrating to God, are to be deemed not so much under the influence of error as madness." 19John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, trans. Henry Beveridge, 1559 edition (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 1. ix.1. Furthermore, "any spirit which passes by the wisdom of God's Word, and suggests any other doctrine, is deservedly suspected of vanity and falsehood." 201bid., I. ix. 2. And furthermore, special revelations and the gifts of the Spirit can in no way supersede the word of God expressed in Scripture. "God did not produce his word before men for the sake of sudden display, intending to abolish it the moment the Spirit should arrive; but he employed the same Spirit, by whose agency he had administered the word, to complete his work by the efficacious confirmation of the word." 21lbid., I. ix. 3. GOP 229.2

Yet, it is in his commentaries on Scripture that Calvin is the most explicit when it comes to extra revelations and visions. For him the biblical gift of prophecy is nothing more than a heightened spiritual insight and gift of wisdom. In his commentary on *Acts 2:17*, *18*, which is a reference to *Joel 2:28*, *29*, he stated that "the word prophesy doth signify nothing else save only the rare and excellent gift of understanding [. . . and] under the kingdom of Christ there shall not be a few prophets only, . . . but all men shall be endued with spiritual wisdom, even to the prophetical excellency." <sup>22John</sup> Calvin, Commentary Upon the Acts of the Apostles, trans. Christopher Fetherstone, ed. Henry Beveridge, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949), 1:87. GOP 229.3

His commentary on 1 Corinthians also provides some insights into his thought. Commenting on 1 Corinthians 12:28 and the apostle Paul's mention of prophets in the list of spiritual gifts, he stated, "By this term [prophets] he means, (in my opinion) not those who were endowed with the aift of prophesying, but those who were endowed with a peculiar gift, not merely for interpreting Scripture, but also for applying it wisely for present use." He went on to further clarify his view. "Let us, then, by prophets in this passage understand, first of all, eminent interpreters of Scripture, and further, persons who are endowed with no common wisdom and dexterity in taking a right view of the present necessity of the church, that they may speak suitably to it, and in this way be, in a manner, ambassadors to communicate the divine will." 23John Calvin, Commentary on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians, trans. John Pringle, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948), 1:415. In this commentary on 1 Corinthians 12:28, and also for 14:3. Calvin equates prophesying with edification. exhortation and consolation, and rejects any link or association with the gift of predicting the future. <sup>24lbid, 1:415, 436.</sup> In a recent study, G. Sujin Pak comes to the same conclusion. Early Reformers understood the gift of prophecy referred to in 1 Corinthians 14 as the interpretation of Scripture. "Zwingli, Luther and Calvin specifically rejected the view of prophecy as visionary specifically contra the Anabaptists; namely, they tied prophecy very closely to scripture and its interpretation in order to reject Anabaptists' claims to 'new revelation' through the Holy Spirit apart from scripture" (G. Sujin Pak, "Three Early Female Protestant Reformers' Appropriation of Prophecy as Interpretation of Scripture," Church History 84, no. 1 [March 2015]: 92, 93). GOP 229 4

### **Among Puritans**

Although a couple of generations later than the Magisterial and Anabaptist Reformers, the Puritans of England also faced numerous movements and manifestations of visionaries and prophets. Their responses to such spiritual manifestations are basically identical to those of the Reformers and become a standard pattern within Protestantism. Puritans understood Paul's comments in 1 Corinthians 14 about prophesying as "an activity of biblical exegesis, coupled with personal testimony and exhortation, after the preacher 'had done his stuff,' and was open to all." 25Geoffrey F. Nuttall, The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1947), 75, 76. GOP 230.1

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Christians in England experienced "a sizeable brood of bogus Christs and obscure persons claiming to be Enoch, Elijah, or some other ecstatic figure foreshadowed in the Bible." <sup>26</sup>Alexandra Walsham, Providence in Early Modern England (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 203, 204. In denouncing such spurious prophets, Protestants usually argued that the gift of prophecy had passed away when the early church came of age and God had long since dispensed with supernatural revelations. <sup>27</sup>Ibid., 205. GOP 230.2

## The Gift of Prophecy During the Reformation: An Adventist Perspective

Before closing this chapter, however, it is appropriate to give a brief commentary on the historical Adventist position regarding what we have seen so far. In 1936, former General Conference president A. G. Daniells published a book entitled The Abiding Gift of Prophecy, 28Arthur G. Daniells, The Abiding Gift of Prophecy (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press®, 1936). in which he explored how the gift of prophecy was almost continuously manifested in the Christian church through the centuries until the time of Ellen White. His arguments and insights have provided the basis of an Adventist understanding of this subject for many years, but these arguments now raise some issues of interpretation. *GOP 230.3* 

The title of the book clearly stated its thesis. Daniells set out to write on the abiding gift of prophecy and wished to demonstrate or to provide sufficient evidence that "this prophetic gift [...] was to abide with the church from Adam to the second advent of our Lord." <sup>29lbid., 6.</sup> In fact, he further stated, "It did not cease with the apostles, but is traceable through the centuries to the last days of human history, just before the return of our Lord." <sup>30lbid.</sup>GOP 231.1

In the introduction to the book, LeRoy Froom also concurred and stated that "the abiding of the gift of prophecy in God's true church [occurred] in all ages and dispensations . . ." <sup>31LeRoy E. Froom,</sup> "Introduction," in Daniells, The Abiding Gift of Prophecy, 9. As an identifying mark of the "remnant church which completes the arrested Reformation of the sixteenth century, [this gift] restores the fullness of apostolic faith and practice . . ." <sup>32Froom, in ibid., 9.</sup> Thus, for Daniells, "we are led to the inescapable conclusion that the prophetic gift was chosen and ordained of God for the benefit of all the world, and for all time. It belongs to the church today, as much as in the ages gone by, and is sorely needed." <sup>33Ibid., 35.</sup> GOP 231.2

Daniells' reasoning on the continuity of the gift of prophecy is framed within a crucial Adventist interpretation of history. Already given in Ellen G. White's book The Great Controversy, Daniells and

others believed that God especially called the Seventh-day Adventist movement at the end of time to fulfill a particular mission in preparation for Jesus' second coming. 34A few decades after the publication of Daniells' book, in Movement of Destiny, LeRoy Froom stated unambiguously, "We need to see ourselves as God sees us—as an inseparable part of the whole of history, as the final segment of His true, sevenfold church that spans the centuries. . . . We need to sense clearly that we are not simply another denomination, arising belatedly in the nineteenth century—too late to come under the category of the Reformation churches. . . . We are emphatically not a people apart, isolated, and unrelated to God's true church of the past. Instead, we are tied inseparably into the noble line of His designated people stretching across the centuries" (LeRoy Edwin Froom, Movement of Destiny [Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald®, 1971], 27). GOP 231.3

While Daniells affirms the continuity of the prophetic gift through the centuries between the time of the early church and his time, the implied definition he uses for the gift is, however, challenging at times. It is obvious that he does not use a consistent definition of the prophetic gift, and unintentionally blurs the meaning of divine quidance and inspiration in his understanding of this spiritual gift. At times the gift refers to supernatural visions and dreams, sometimes it is a spiritual illumination to explain the Word of God, and in other examples it is a strong desire to be faithful to God's Word. Daniells almost claims that any movement that somehow opposes the Roman papacy in the early Middle Ages is a prophetic movement and thus has the gift of prophecy; at least he allows the possibility that the gift of prophecy may have been present in these movements 35The examples he gives raise some serious concerns about Christian doctrinal orthodoxy in movements that were obviously heretical. "From the beginning of the Montanist and Novatian protests and separations, in the second and third centuries, on to the great Reformation of the sixteenth, there were many godly men and women who joined in the movements for reform, and raised up large bodies of earnest, witnessing Christians. Prominent among these courageous Reformers were Montanus, who flourished about 170 A.D.; Novatian, about 250 A.D.; Donatus, about 305 A.D.; Ambrose, about 374 A.D.; and Constantine of the Paulicians, about 700 A.D. Claudius, Bishop of Turin, preached in the valleys of Piedmont from 817 to 839. Peter Waldo, the dauntless leader of the Waldenses, labored from 1160 to 1179. Joachim of Italy lived between the years 1145-1201; and Wycliffe, scholar and reformer in England, between 1320-1384. Militz of Bohemia made himself known about 1363-1374;

and Matthias of Janow, Bohemia, between 1381-1394. John Huss of Bohemia lived from 1369-1415; Savonarola of Italy, 1452-1498; and Martin Luther of Germany, 1483-1546. During the whole of this long, tragic period there was an irrepressible conflict between the papacy and the Reformers. Divine light was penetrating the hearts of sincere men and women who longed for salvation, and who walked in the faint rays of the light that had already shone upon them. The Lord had 'a few names' that had not defiled their garments. They walked with Him in white, for they were worthy. Rev. 3:4" (ibid., 214). These implied definitions do not really accord with the current Adventist definition of the gift of prophecy as received or defined by Ellen White. Thus we are left to wonder about the historical evidence for the presence of a prophetic gift similar to Ellen White's. Yet, surprisingly, Daniells admits the weakness of his evidence. *GOP 231.4* 

While holding to our conviction that the bestowal of the prophetic gift was, in the purpose of God, to abide through the centuries to the end of the gospel dispensation, we do not deem it advisable to undertake in this brief treatise to establish the genuineness of the calling of this individual or that to the prophetic office. There is historical testimony through the centuries from the fourth to the eighteenth that seems convincing enough in a considerable number of instances; but we regard it unwise to introduce names about which there might be some legitimate question, and thus obscure the larger principle we are pursuing. GOP 232.1

We shall therefore content ourselves at this juncture, first by reaffirming our belief that light from heaven shone here and there all through the darkness of this benighted period, not only from the Holy Scriptures themselves, but also from God's chosen way of communicating with His spokesmen through the prophetic gift; and, second, by presenting testimony of a general character in support of this conviction. 36lbid., 215.GOP 232.2

For Daniells the gift of prophecy was manifested in the lives of the faithful people of God who studied the Bible and came to realize its true message, spoke against errors, and followed the light they found. The witness of these faithful people bears testimony to the light shining from the Word of God. To do this, he merges the concepts of a prophetic messenger of God (such as an Old Testament prophet or Ellen White) and a person witnessing for the

truth already revealed by a prophet and seeking the reformation of the church. In his estimation, all precursors to the Protestant Reformation, such as the Waldenses, Wycliff, Huss and Jerome, had the gift of prophecy. <sup>37Daniells</sup> explains: "The history of the post-Reformation times shows unquestioned evidence of the same imperative need of inspired leaders who had existed in the pre-Reformation centuries. The Reformation did not spring up in a day, nor was it finished in a day. The great events that took place between the nailing of Luther's propositions on the church door at Wittenberg in 1517, and the signing of the Augsburg Confession in 1530, were the climax, the consummation, of centuries of study, preaching, persecution, and martyrdom of godly men. The maintenance, the holding of what had been gained, and its fuller development, have required the same kind of men who, under God's inspired leadership, brought the Reformation to birth" (ibid., <sup>223).</sup> He also considered the leaders of these reform movements as "inspired leaders." 38"It is appropriate to say again that the reformers during the post-Reformation years were in as great need of the divine Presence, of the quidance and instruction of the Holy Spirit, as were leaders in pre-Reformation times. It has been confidently declared by Christian writers and historians that the prophetic gift appeared among them at divers times and places" (ibid, 224). GOP 232 3

Daniells' categories of "inspired" leader and faithful interpreter of the Scripture is ascribed to Luther's ministry. In fact, many scholars and biographers of Luther's life also ascribe this title to Luther. Luther and Calvin understood the gift of prophecy referred to in 1 Corinthians 14 as the faithful interpretation of the Word of God in the church community, a ministry that Luther and Calvin certainly performed with courage and determination. <sup>39See</sup> Johannes Hartlapp, "Martin Luther, un prophète," in Christianisme et prophétisme: Actes du colloque de la Faculté adventiste de théologie, Collonges-sous-Salève, France, May 1-3, 2003, 69-79. John Calvin had a similar interpretation of 1 Corinthians 14. See John Calvin, Commentary on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians, trans. John Pringle, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948), 1:415, 436. GOP

What are we to make of Daniells' lack of evidence and arguments regarding the perpetuity of the gift of prophecy during the centuries between the early church and Ellen White? His merging and blurring of diverse definitions of the gift of prophecy and his

broadening of the meaning of the gift allow him to see in the pre-Reformation, Reformation, and post-Reformation periods evidences of God's leading and guidance in the lives of faithful witnesses and "inspired leaders." *GOP* 233.2

Through the years, commentators—following the interpretation endorsed by the Magisterial Reformers—have accepted a broader definition of the gift of prophecy in their interpretation of the gift referred to by Paul in 1 Corinthians 12 and 14. Basically, commentators see the gift of prophecy as a manifestation of some "inspired" illumination of the meaning of Scripture, similar to what happens in the ministry of preachers and revivalists, or as an exhortation for some believers in a particular context. Such a definition concurs with Daniells' use of the meaning of the gift of prophecy in his book, but it is not the same kind of prophetic gift as Adventists ascribe to Ellen White as the fulfillment of the testimony of Jesus at the end of time. GOP 233.3

Adventists have generally made a clear distinction between the Holy Spirit's illumination received by a pastor in the preparation or delivery of a sermon, corresponding to a subjective intensification of insights into the Scripture, and the kind of divine inspiration received by a prophet or Ellen White. 40An example of how Adventists have understood the manifestation of the gift of prophecy in Ellen White's life is Denton E. Rebok, Believe His Prophets (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald®, 1956). Although both come from the Holy Spirit, illumination and inspiration are different gifts and given for different purposes. *GOP* 233.4

Daniells' examples of the manifestation of the abiding gift of prophecy fall short. His examples simply support the idea of the possibility of the gift of prophecy through the centuries, but lack tangible evidence. So after considering his evidence, one is still left with a question: Is there really an *abiding* gift of prophecy? The Reformers did not think so. *GOP 233.5* 

#### Conclusion

As Seventh-day Adventists mark the centennial of Ellen White's death they face many challenges: one of them is certainly the meaning of the "gift of prophecy" and its abiding nature in the church through the centuries. Our study of the manifestation of the gift of prophecy during the Reformation and how the Reformers understood it reveals some challenging ideas. *GOP 234.1* 

- 1. A. G. Daniells' study on the abiding gift of prophecy in 1936, which is also supported by LeRoy Froom's interpretation of history, although done with good intentions, provides no tangible evidence that the gift of prophecy as manifested in the ministry of Ellen G. White existed between the time of the apostles and her time. While Daniells acknowledged there were many claimants to the gift of prophecy, most were or have been discredited for some of their views or practices. His use of the expression "gift of prophecy" blurred and confused a number of meanings of that expression. Hence, if there is a lack of evidence to support an abiding gift, is it possible that Ellen White's gift was a singular or exceptional manifestation of the gift at the end of time? How does this impact the concept of the perpetuity of the gifts? GOP 234.2
- 2. If we accept the idea of an *abiding gift* of prophecy from the early church until the end of time, and yet without any clear evidence of its manifestation, are we required to use a broader definition of the gift of prophecy—one that is inclusive of "inspired" leaders, insightful preachers, and faithful trailblazers, as Daniells suggested in his study, and as some scholars understand Luther's ministry? A prophet is one who, in part or in sum, explains the past through the eyes of Scripture and exhorts the community to faithfulness and perseverance. The reception of dreams, visions, and special revelations and the manifestation of supernatural phenomena are not necessary for claimants to such a prophetic role. Would this broader definition redefine Ellen White's ministry? *GOP 234.3*
- 3. Also challenging the Adventist doctrine of the gift of prophecy is the Reformers' understanding of visions and revelations and their position that such manifestations within the Reformation churches were tantamount to negating their understanding of *sola Scriptura*.

The Reformers rejected the evidence later used by Daniells and Froom to support the possibility of the gift of prophecy. Adventists have always claimed that the principle of *sola Scriptura* is not denied in the manifestation of the gift of prophecy in the life of Ellen White. Reformers did not accept such a nuancing of the relationship between the definitive role of Scripture and the role of supernatural revelations and visions. The Magisterial Reformers, in fact, believed that a supernatural manifestation of the gift of prophecy was no longer necessary since the word of God in Scripture was the *only* standard of faith and practice. This view remains the dominant one in Christian thought today, and it continues to challenge the Adventist position. *GOP 234.4* 

# Chapter 12 - Dreams and Visions in American Religious History

Michael W. Campbell

One of the most controversial issues in Christian history is the perpetuity of spiritual gifts, most notably, the gift of prophecy. <sup>1For a</sup> Seventh-day Adventist overview about the role of spiritual gifts, see George E. Rice, "Spiritual Gifts," in Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology, ed. Raoul Dederen (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald®, 2000), 610-650. For a broad survey on the role of the Holy Spirit, see Anthony C. Thiselton, The Holy Spirit—In Biblical Teaching, Through the Centuries, and Today (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, <sup>2013</sup>). As already noted in the previous chapter, by the time of the Protestant Reformation both "Luther and Zwingli rejected . . . the claim of all radical visionaries to fresh revelation. Christ's prophetic office had put an end to free prophecy." <sup>2David C.</sup> Steinmetz, Taking the Long View: Christian Theology in Historical Perspective (New York: Oxford University Press, <sup>2011</sup>), <sup>89</sup>. In essence, Protestants transformed the prophetic office into the pastoral preaching of the Word. *GOP 235.1* 

In the centuries afterward, especially within an American religious context where Protestants migrated to the New World, prophetic claims had the potential either to augment or expand the borders of the scriptural canon, especially the Bible. <sup>3David C. Steinmetz, Taking</sup> the Long View: Christian Theology in Historical Perspective (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 89. While most Christian thinkers agreed that spiritual gifts (*charismata*) were given by the Holy Spirit to edify the Christian community, the real debate centered on the nature and authority of extra biblical revelation. Despite the initial hesitancy of Reformers such as Luther and Zwingli, during the Evangelical awakenings many individuals claimed to receive divine guidance through dreams and visions. *GOP* 235.2

By the time Ellen Harmon (later White) received her first vision in December 1844, there was a rich culture of visions within the American religious marketplace. According to one historian there was an estimated 50 prophets among Millerite Adventists, with as many as 200 seers across America during the 1840s. <sup>4George R.</sup> Knight notes that visions were a "predominant characteristic" of early shut-door

Adventists. See George R. Knight, Millennial Fever and the End of the World: A Study of Millerite Adventism (Boise, Idaho: Pacific Press®, 1993), 254, 256; idem, William Miller and the Rise of Adventism (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press®, 2010), 217. In order for us to understand this rich cultural context of dreams and visions, it is necessary to examine the development of ideas that led to such an environment. *GOP 235.3* 

At the heart of the debate was the definition of canon. Some advocated for a "closed" canon (cessationism) versus an "open" canon (noncessationism). The very topic suggests a contradiction in terms. It is quite natural for some to view an "open" canon with suspicion because it has a tendency to provide sanction for new ideas. This convenient "loophole" could be maliciously exploited for various individuals to promote themselves. 5David F. Holland, Sacred Borders: Continuing Revelation and Canonical Restraint in Early America (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 4. While it is not possible within the constraints of this paper to survey all American visionaries, this paper seeks to better understand the historical context that allowed for such an openness to dreams and visions, as well as the incredible diversity and creativity among antebellum American prophets. *GOP* 236.1

## **Evangelicalism and Prophecy**

Evangelicalism developed in the transatlantic world of the seventeenth century. American evangelicalism consisted of contributions from Scotch-Irish Presbyterianism, New England Puritanism, and Continental Pietism (an emphasis upon the heart), with special focus on the importance of conversion. Waves of revivals broke out from the time of Jonathan Edwards (1720s) up and through the American Civil War. Some of the most well-known revivals have been characterized as the "Great Awakening" (which reached a climax during the 1720s through the 1740s) and the "Second Great Awakening" (which reached a climax from the 1790s through the 1830s). Dialogue among church leaders during each of these revivals showcases an ongoing debate over the formation of the canon, sources of authority, and whether or not the canon was closed. *GOP* 236.2

#### The Great Awakening

Revivalists during the Great Awakening, in particular during the 1740s, imagined that revivals would usher in the imminent kingdom of God. <sup>6Kidd, 267</sup>. Such revivals were held in disrepute by the "Old Lights"—such as the Congregationalists and Anglicans—who sought to discredit such religious awakenings. As Puritan heirs they both opposed revival and fought to maintain the borders of the canon. Despite this, dreams and visionary experiences were widespread during the Great Awakening. <sup>7lbid., 130</sup>·GOP 236.3

The most respected intellectual and ardent revivalist, Jonathan Edwards, paid close attention to the importance of conversion. Such attention bespoke a dramatic shift in theological sensibilities. Edwards strongly resisted any attempts toward an open canon. <sup>8Holland, 6.</sup> At the same time he argued for a more open view about the ongoing role of the Holy Spirit. He even acknowledged the possibility of dreams and visions. Sarah Edwards had a series of dreams that he viewed as providential. *GOP* 236.4

The proof was in their "enduring godly effects." Satan could mimic such charismata. <sup>9Kidd, 118, 119.</sup> Great care had to be exercised so

as to distinguish between true versus false revival. GOP 237.1

The real challenge for Edwards and other Evangelicals related to those who claimed to receive visions (as opposed to dreams). It was not unusual to get reports similar to the Evangelical preacher Eleazar Wheelock, who encountered numerous visions during his travels. "Faintings and fits" were commonplace in meetings as participants in revivals lost all bodily strength. <sup>10Ibid., 113, 107.</sup> Such claims tested the limits of canonical authority and the genuineness of revival. Edwards recognized what was at stake. He advocated for a more moderate Evangelical position. *GOP 237.2* 

One of the most dramatic cases of radicalism centered upon the career of Hugh Bryan. At one point he claimed to receive visions, but after a series of mishaps finally confessed to being tricked by Satan into claiming prophetic authority. <sup>11Ibid., 79.</sup> Edwards felt that most visionaries were merely enthusiasts carried away with their emotions. At worst, some were base fanatics. Eleazar Whee- lock went so far as to argue that extraordinary gifts of the Spirit ceased with the early Christian church. <sup>12Ibid., 180.</sup> Thus, among Evangelicals in the Great Awakening, a split arose between moderates (such as Edwards), with regulated revival, juxtaposed against radicals who argued for no regulation (or potential excesses) of revival. *GOP 237.3* 

If Edwards sought middle ground (a moderate position), George Whitefield was not so concerned about being tainted by radicalism. As the most visible person of the Great Awakening, he spent his life crisscrossing the Eastern Seaboard. The historian Thomas S. Kidd argues that by 1740 Whitefield was "the most famous man in America." 13Thomas S. Kidd, George Whitefield: America's Spiritual Founding Father (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2014), 1. Whitefield displayed a profound openness to the possibility of supernatural dreams or visions, and claimed to at least receive dreams that he believed were God speaking to him. Such revelations were personal in nature and related to spiritual development. Whitefield emphasized the primacy of Scripture and did not view such revelations as a threat, even if they blurred the borders of canonicity. Such openness appears to have contributed, among

American Methodists, to an increased openness to dreams and visions during the Second Great Awakening. <sup>14For a discussion of</sup> Whitefield, see Kidd, The Great Awakening, 170. GOP 237 4

#### The Second Great Awakening

Conditions during the Revolution not only allowed for revival, but increased theological innovation in the midst of conflict. Perhaps the most significant innovation was the rejection of Calvinist theology. Methodists and Baptists rose to prominence. It is therefore not surprising that more established traditions, heirs of the Puritans who advocated a closed canon, declined. The radicalism characteristic of the Great Awakening in the previous century was accentuated by new waves of revivals characteristic of the Second Great Awakening. *GOP* 237.5

Revivalism began to take on many new forms, especially with the frontier camp meeting. Waves of revivals began during the summer of 1800 across southwest Kentucky. During a three-day camp meeting approximately 45 people were converted. Those present considered it as "the greatest outpouring of the Holy Spirit since Pentecost in the first century." It paved the way for "The Great Revival" at Cane Ridge, Kentucky, the following summer. <sup>15Barry</sup> Hankins, The Second Great Awakening and the Transcendentalists (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 2004), 9, 10. An estimated 10,000 to 20,000 people attended what is considered to be the largest and most famous camp meeting of the Second Great Awakening. *GOP* 238.1

In addition to camp meetings, revivals spread under popular evangelists such as Charles Finney (1792-1875). He urged listeners to accept the salvation Christ's death purchased and to subordinate the will to the Father through the Holy Spirit. Appeals culminated with listeners coming forward to the "anxious bench" to ratify their decision. Conversions were facilitated through the Holy Spirit and careful planning. Finney was so dependent upon the leading of the Holy Spirit that at times he would not know what he was going to speak about until he stepped up to the pulpit. <sup>16Charles</sup> E. Hambrick-Stowe, Charles G. Finney and the Spirit of American Evangelicalism (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 35. His Memoir contains copious

examples of how "God revealed to me" or how the "Spirit of God made that revelation . . . [through] a direct revelation from God to me." 17For a compilation, see Daniel R. Jennings, The Supernatural Occurrences of Charles G. Finney (Sean Multimedia, 2009), 9ff. Finney allowed for and even encouraged miracles and the outpouring of the prophetic gift. The possibility of additional revelations he did not view as a threat to the canon of Scripture. *GOP* 238.2

In a similar way Phoebe Palmer (1807-1874), perhaps the best-known female revivalist of the Second Great Awakening, affirmed the primacy of Scripture. "My highest and all-consuming desire was to be a Bible Christian," she famously wrote. "The BIBLE, THE BLESSED BIBLE, IS THE TEXT BOOK. Not Wesley, not Fletche not Finney, not Mahan, not Upham, not Mrs. Phoebe Palmer, but the Bible—the holy Bible, is the first and last, and in the midst always. The Bible is the standard, the ground, the platform, the creed." <sup>18Cited in Hankins, 113</sup>. She also allowed for the possibility of miracles, dreams, and revelations. Just like Finney, she did not view such blurred boundaries as a threat to the canon of Scripture. *GOP 238.3* 

Such an obvious ambiguity, perhaps even to the point of being a contradiction, affirmed the continued gifts of the Holy Spirit, especially healings, dreams, and visions. If the genuineness of such radicalism was debated during the Great Awakening, it was embraced on a much larger scale during the Second Great Awakening. Visions became ubiquitous. The borders of the canon of Scripture, which for many Protestants still frequently included the Apocrypha, were fluid enough to allow for at least an increased openness to prophetic revelations. At the very least, a whole host of innovators sought to fill this vacuum. The possibility of visions was a very real part of American religious life during the Second Great Awakening. Even those who did not receive visions, such as Finney and Palmer, claimed to experience God speaking directly to them during their conversion. Thus the Second Great Awakening, while it affirmed the primacy of Scripture, at the same time marked a new openness on the borders of the canon to prophecy. GOP 238.4

#### **Antebellum Innovations**

The decades leading up to the American Civil War were an extremely fertile period in American religious history. The antinomian spirit unleashed by the Second Great Awakening led to many new movements and sects. Some movements were a reaction to the undercurrent of materialism that defined the universe as one vast machine. Some movements reacted vociferously, most notably during the 1840s and 1850s, when a whole series of "comeouters"—a series of groups related to the spiritualists and abolitionists—who "came out" from the churches because they believed that they had become "poisoned by association with economic injustice or chattel slavery." <sup>19David S.</sup> Reynolds, Walt Whitman's America: A Cultural Biography (New York: Vintage, 1996), 238. GOP

Spirituality during the antebellum period was in a large part shaped by a wide variety of cultural developments during mid-nineteenth-century America. <sup>20Ibid., 235.</sup> This progressive optimism was characterized by the distributor Fowler & Wells, who popularized a whole host of new ideas. Phrenology became "an all defining system of self-help that took into account all aspects of the human being, physical and spiritual." <sup>21Ibid., 236.</sup> Mesmerism, another area Fowler & Wells popularized, became even more popular in America than in Europe. "By the late forties the nation was flooded with mesmeric healers who used a language of magnetism, electricity, healing, and clairvoyance" personified in the poetry of Walt Whitman. <sup>22Ibid.</sup> *GOP 239.2* 

American religion, reflecting the Barnum and Bailey circus, became increasingly showmanlike in nature. The surge of revivalism, marked by a transition from an agrarian to a market economy, along with the spread of mass print culture made America a remarkably fertile place for new religions—and especially prophets. Several new movements were based upon sacred writings. Joseph Smith reportedly had directions from Jesus to found a new religion. He claimed to find golden plates that he translated into *The Book of Mormon* (1830). Other inspired texts included Andrew Jackson Davis's *The Great Harmonia* (1850) and Mary Baker Eddy's

Science and Health With Key to the Scriptures (1875). Even secular writers such as Ralph W. Emerson famously saw a "transparent eye-ball" in which he announced himself "part or particle of God." 23David S. Reynolds, Waking Giant: America in the Age of Jackson (New York: HarperCollins, 2008), 253. Harriet Beecher Stowe claimed it was God, not she, who wrote *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. These illuminist texts were in keeping with the illuminist spirit of the era. <sup>24Reynolds</sup>, Walt Whitman's America, 257. Inspiration was viewed as an ongoing process with present revelation superseding earlier inspired sources, including the Bible. *GOP* 239.3

## **Spiritualist Cults**

Such popular movements crested during the 1850s with the rise of mesmerism, spiritualism, Swedenborgianism, and Harmonialism. Collectively these movements emphasized interactions with the spirit world as sources of ongoing spiritual revelation and therefore authority. Mesmerism developed into a system of healing, popularized in terms of animal magnetism, with images of electricity and fluid energy. Spiritualism claimed to have contact with spirits. Swedenbor- gianism popularized notions of spiritual essences and sensuous mysticism. And Harmonialism, a broad umbrella term, drew many of these movements together to posit an external interchange between mind and matter. "All of these movements challenged boundaries of time and space."

Franz Anton Mesmer argued that "all physical and spiritual phenomena were linked by a magnetic, electrical ether or fluid, called by his followers the odic force." Certain people, known as operators, had the ability to use their odic powers to magnetize, or place in a trance, other people. Such persons became "subjects" or "mediums." By the 1830s mesmerism was popularized by Charles Poyen and Robert Collyer, with a host of imitators in their wake. Even Walt Whitman was eventually won over, declaring that "it reveals at once the existence of a whole new world of truth." <sup>26New</sup> York Sunday Times, Aug. 14, 1842, cited in Reynolds, Walt Whitman's America, 260. For a broad survey of mesmerism, see Robert C. Fuller, Mesmerism and the American Cure of Souls (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982). *GOP* 240.2

By 1843 there were an estimated 20,000 to 30,000 mesmerists lecturing in the northeastern United States alone. Many used their odic force before large audiences to control the behavior and attitudes of their mesmerized subjects. Some were even able to put their subjects into the highest, or third, degree of trance in which their minds traveled to distant times and places. Some even used mesmerism to heal, which led, later on, to the mind-cure movement. As the operator put the subject into a trance, an operator could make his or her identity shift rapidly. <sup>27Reynolds, Waking Giant, 231-235</sup>. GOP 240.3

Mesmerism was joined in 1848 by the "Hydesville rappings" in New York. Two young girls, 14-year-old Margaret Fox and her 12-yearold sister. Katherine, heard with their family strange knockings in their home in Hydesville. They claimed the sounds came from a spirit they called Splitfoot. Eventually the case was sensationalized. During the 1850s they went on tour to demonstrate before audiences their ability to communicate with the dead. Many were won over to spiritualism, including Horace Greeley, the ex-slave Sojourner Truth, and the abolitionists Sarah and Angelina Grimke and William Lloyd Garrison. <sup>28Reynolds</sup>, Walt Whitman's America, 262. Soon thousands of mediums held seances with rappings, chair movings, table liftings, flying objects, etc. Some mediums, such as Cora Hatch and Anna Henderson, gave well-attended lectures about the afterlife while in a trance state. In the 1850s "trance writing and trance lecturing were performed by hundreds who spiritual gifts." <sup>291bid., 263.</sup> The embrace of claimed to have spiritualism effectually negated any boundaries of canon by making spirit revelations the litmus test for authority. One historian estimates that there were some 20,000 mediums along with 2 million adherents in a time when the United States population was 11 million. <sup>30Reynolds, Waking Giant, 374.</sup> Within this fertile milieu many other individuals claimed to have the prophetic gift. Perhaps the best-known are the revelations of Joseph Smith, Jr. GOP 240.4

#### Mormons

Earlier during the 1820s and 1830s one of the most striking purveyors of visions in antebellum America was Joseph Smith, Jr. 31Hans J. Hillerbrand, A New History of Christianity (Nashville: Abingdon, 2012), <sup>291, 292.</sup> Born in 1805 into a farming family, he later recollected that before his fifteenth birthday he had prayed to God to direct him to the true church. The divine response, in the form of a vision, told him that there was no such church. Even the early Christian church had lost its purity. Instead, as he was told in vision, God would bring about the much-needed reforms. In later visions, most notably in September 1823, he met an angel by the name of Moroni, who confided to him the existence of golden plates hidden under a nearby rock. Four years later the apparition occurred again, with additional instruction to take the plates and translate them into English. He translated them while sitting behind a curtain. Smith took Martin Harris, Oliver Cowdery, and David Whitmer (known as the Three Witnesses), who confided that they had seen the golden plates. 32Richard L. Bushman, Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), 78.<sub>GOP</sub> 241.1

Once the translation was completed, the Book of Mormon, as it came to be known, stretched over some 600 pages. It gave an account of the migration of the lost tribes of Israelites to America. They in turn were visited by Jesus Christ, who offered to them a word of salvation. The great warrior Mormon, who died in the fifth century, wrote down the story on golden plates. They laid hidden until discovered by Joseph Smith, Jr., 1,500 years later. The claims to visions, along with the translation of the golden plates, became immediately controversial. Outsiders were not allowed to view the golden plates, but advocates argued that how could a man with no formal education be able to write such a book. Yet for Smith's followers the answer was that a miracle had occurred. Opposition to his message forced the fledgling group, numbering about 10,000 by the 1840s, westward to Ohio and Illinois, and after his death in 1844, the majority relocated to Utah. GOP 241.2

Smith was innovative in terms of his understanding of progressive revelation. He believed the new revelations superseded all previous revelations. While he recognized the divine origins of the Bible.

Smith believed that his writings were necessary in order to interpret the biblical canon. In doing so, he set a precedent whereby subsequent Mormon leaders had authority to reveal divine truth. GOP 241.3

#### Quakers and Shakers

The Society of Friends, or Quakers, coalesced around the ministry of George Fox (1624-1691), considered the most charismatic figure in religion in the seventeenth century. <sup>33lbid., 212.</sup> He rehabilitated the role of the Holy Spirit. He helped pave the way for another creative expression in American religion known as the "United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearance." 34lbid., 291. led by "Mother" Ann Lee (1736-1774). After giving birth to four children (all of whom died in infancy), she began to believe that sexual intercourse was sinful. She joined a group of pacifist Quakers, who then implemented a series of reforms. They believed that possession by the divine spirit led to uncontrollable shaking, which led to their being labeled Shakers. Although she died early, she founded a number of "colonies" with distinct characteristics including simplicity, cleanliness, and usefulness. As individuals they held no private property, vigorously opposed slavery, and refused to fight in the military. Together the Quakers and Shakers experienced significant growth during antebellum America. Like many others they blurred the boundaries of canonicity by turning inward for spiritual inspiration and authority. GOP 242.1

#### Restorationists

A significant pulse within American religion was the notion to return to the purity of the early Christian church. Elias Smith (1769-1846) and Abner Jones (1772-1841) were two advocates in New England who founded a loose affiliation of churches known as the "Christian Connexion." A parallel movement broke away from Methodism in the American South led by James O'Kelly (1735-1826) and Barton Stone (1772-1844). This loose "connection" or affiliation of churches were united in their self-perceived commitment to restore the Christian church from various corruptions to their understanding of early Christian purity. Such a commitment led to an openness toward dreams and visions *GOP 242 2* 

Elias Smith, for example, related that a personal revelation as part of his conversion narrative. <sup>35Elias</sup> Smith, The Life, Conversion, Teaching, Travels and Sufferings of Elias Smith, vol. 1 (Boston: [by the author], 1840), 149. Smith notes that initially he is hesitant about this dream in which he meets an angel, but eventually concludes "that my dream about a dream is true" (192). At age 16 he claimed that Jesus Christ had physically appeared to him. Upon entering the woods, he slipped. As he lay in the snow, "a light appeared to shine from heaven, not only into my head, but into my heart." He described his mind as rising higher, until he beheld "the Lamb" on "Mount Sion" [sic]. <sup>36lbid., 53.</sup> Smith's understanding of revelations included dreams, which he believed must be differentiated between those that are true versus false. Some are "vain" or reflect "ordinary business," yet others "are by the spirit of God." <sup>37lbid., 333, 334.</sup> *GOP 242.3* 

Restorationists appealed to a radical return to the New Testament church, which created an openness to supernatural dreams and visions. The authority for such revelations was often linked, as it was for Elias Smith, as part of a conversion narrative. Such revelations were not generally perceived as conducive to creating new texts of Scripture, but rather as an affirmation of their religious experience. *GOP 243.1* 

#### **Adventists**

William Miller (1792-1849), the namesake of the Millerite revival of the 1830s and 1840s, noted the pivotal role of the Holy Spirit in his personal conversion. "God by his Holy Spirit opened my eyes," he observed. He is "a rock in the midst of the ocean of life." Jesus became his friend and the Bible a delight. <sup>38Joshua V. Himes, Views</sup> of the Prophecies (Boston: Joshua V. Himes, 1841), 11. Democratized religion meant that anyone could study the Bible through the agency of the Holy Spirit. Miller, like many other innovators during the Second Great Awakening, upheld the primacy of Scripture, but allowed for the possibility for at least continued revelation through dreams. Even later Sabbatarian Adventists, such as James White, viewed Miller's dreams as evidence of God's divine leading. *GOP* 243.2

Some historians, such as George R. Knight, estimate that there were some 200 prophetic seers operating in New England alone during the 1840s. <sup>39George</sup> R. Knight, presentation to the Mid-America Union Pastor's Meeting, May 3, 2011. M. F. Whittier, a non-Adventist observer and brother to John Greenleaf Whittier, noted that in Portland "nothing was more common than visions." 40Cited by Ann Taves, "Visions." in Ellen Harmon White: American Prophet, ed. Terrie Dopp Aamodt, Gary Land, and Ronald L. Numbers (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), <sup>40.</sup> Merlin Burt highlights that such radical visionary activity was on the "periphery" of Millerite Adventism. 41Merlin D. Burt, "The Historical Background, Interconnected Development, and Integration of the Doctrines of the Sanctuary, the Sabbath, and Ellen G. White's Role in Sabbatarian Adventism From 1844 to 1849" (Ph.D. diss., Andrews University, 2002), 27 but research by Ann Taves suggests that they were much more central to the Adventist narrative 42Ann Taves, Fits, Trances, and Visions: Experiencing Religion and Explaining Experience From Wesley to James (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999), 128-165. Fred Hoyt and Ron Graybill highlight at least five prominent visionaries who operated in and around Portland, Maine, around 1844: Dorinda Baker. 43Records for Dorinda Baker are scarce. There does appear to be a Dorinda Baker who was born in Canada East about 1828 or 1829. If this is the same individual, she came over to Orrington, Maine, for a brief time before returning to Canada. Emily C.

Clemons (later Pearson), 44Emily C. Clemons and Clorinda S. Minor (another Millerite writer) were both active following the Millerite disappointment with Joseph Marsh and the publication of Voice of Truth, edited by J. D. Pickands and J. B. Cook in Cleveland, Ohio. They pointed to a series of prophetic dates, but were censored by Joshua V. Himes. See Burt, 93, 96. Mary Hamlin, Phoebe Knapp, and William Foy. 45Ron Graybill, Fred Hoyt, and Rennie Schoepflin, "Scandal or Rite of Passage: Historians on the Dammon Trial," Spectrum 17 (August 1987): 38, 39. Extensive research has revealed very little about their lives with the exception of Clemons, who later went on to have a substantial literary career. 46Emily Clemens (1818-1900) after the Millerite revival later married and had a rather prolific literary career. See "Emily Clemens Pearson, 1818-1900," Legacy: A Journal of American Women Writers 29, no. 2 (June 2012) The most notable connection occurred between Dorinda Baker and Ellen Harmon (later White), who both apparently received visions following the Great Disappointment, including one highly publicized episode at the home of James Atkinson, Jr. The subsequent arrest and trial of Israel Dammon brought disrepute and suspicion to visionaries and fanaticism in the wake of the Great Disappointment. 47Newspapers picked up the news story in the spring of 1845. "The trial of Israel Dammon, a Millerite elder at Dover, Maine, on the 17th ult. disclosed scenes of disgusting obscenity among those deluded and wicked people, that are shockingly revolting." See "Millerism" in Vermont Phoenix, Mar. 28, 1845, 2. "Things are in a bad way at Portland," wrote Joshua V. Himes to William Miller. He discussed the case of Dammon, who had taken his "spiritual wife" and accepted her visions. <sup>48Cited</sup> by George R. Knight, William Miller and the Rise of Adventism (Boise, Idaho: Pacific Press®, 2010), 218. Some historians suggest that the Israel Dammon trial showcases how Ellen White, with the aid of James White, helped to assert herself over would-be prophetic rivals. 49Ann Taves, "Visions," in Ellen Harmon White, 40. Unfortunately, concrete evidence is lacking and some of the witness testimony contradictory. From the perspective of Ellen Harmon, she viewed Dammon and others as characteristic of the worst kind of fanaticism. 50Initially it appears that Ellen White thought positively of Israel Dammon, at least enough that she was willingto travel with him to his home. It appears that the incident that led to the subsequent trial of Israel Dammon was a tipping point, after which there are no positive references to him. The Israel Dammon incident later came into sharper focus during an exchange

Instead, Ellen White viewed two other visionaries as especially significant to her own narrative. The first was William Foy (1818-1893), an African American, who received at least two visions and published a pamphlet. <sup>51</sup>For an overview of Foy, see Delbert W. Baker, The Unknown Prophet: Before Ellen White, God Chose William Ellis Foy, rev. and updated ed. (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald®, 2013). Ellen Harmon apparently heard him speak on at least two occasions and felt that his revelations were genuine. Another visionary, Hazen Foss (1819-1893), reportedly received visions. According to Ellen White, he refused to share these, which led to the visions being taken from him and given to her. She recounted that once when they met he warned her to be faithful in sharing the visions. <sup>52</sup>Michael W. Campbell, "Hazen Little Foss," in Ellen G. White Encyclopedia, ed. Denis Fortin and Jerry Moon (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald®, 2013), 378, 379.

Dreams and visions appear to have been common within the Second Great Awakening. Thus it is not surprising that Millerites were at least open to the possibility of new sources of revelation. 53William Miller, for example, received several significant "dreams" that he felt had spiritual significance. Later on Sabbatarian Adventists reprinted these dreams in early publications as evidence of God's supernatural leading as part of the Advent awakening. Although they were ultimately disappointed, they did not give up confidence in the validity of Miller's dreams as God guiding them. As the Millerite revival broke apart after the Great Disappointment, when Christ did not return as anticipated on October 22, 1844, many Millerite Adventists gave up their faith. Some were attracted to a host of other myriad movements, including the Shakers. Not a few gravitated over to Spiritualism. Such fluidity suggests that the borders of canonicity were blurred, which made it incredibly easy to exchange one set of beliefs for another. Ultimately, the main group of remaining Millerite Adventists, under the leadership of joshua V. Himes, who was the right-hand man to Miller, eventually denounced all forms of radicalism, especially visions, at the Albany Conference in May 1845: "We have no confidence in any new messages, visions, dreams, tongues, miracles, extraordinary revelations, impressions, discerning of spirits, or teachings not in accord with the unadulterated word of God." 54"Proceedings of the Mutual Conference of Adventists held in the City of Albany, the 29th and 30th of April, and 1st of May, 1845" (New York, 1845), 30. Himes clearly felt that all such supernatural manifestations were radical forms of Christianity that would discredit the movement as it splintered apart. *GOP 244.2* 

One such group that Himes initially would identify as "radical" because of its identification with the visionary Ellen Harmon was formed by the "come-outers." This group was "radical" because they both affirmed their Advent experience as legitimate, but also upheld the genuineness of Ellen Harmon's visions. Some, such as Otis Nichols, went so far as to write William Miller urging him to give due consideration. If Miller replied, his response is no longer extant. 55Otis Nichols to William Miller, Apr. 20, 1846, Aurora University Archives. After her first vision Ellen Harmon traveled with her sister, Sarah, and James White, encouraging disappointed Adventists. For his part, James White supported the end-time manifestation of visions: "I think the Bible warrants us in looking for visions." 56James White, "Letter From Bro. White," The Day Star, Sept. 6, 1845, 17. GOP 245.1

Some of Ellen Harmon's earliest opposition came from Joseph Turner, who believed that she was a fraud. Others, such as Sargent and Robbins, probably her two most vociferous opponents, traveled around New England seeking to undermine her prophetic claims. They suggested that they were mesmerists, and achieved a state of vision through James White's odic force. Otis Nichols, an early supporter from Boston, noted the dramatic buildup: *GOP 245.2* 

The bands of believers in Boston, Roxbury, and Randolph, a large company, had become almost totally alienated to Bro. & Sr. White, through the false teachings, deceptions, and satanic influences of J. Turner and his associates, T. Haskin Harvel and others. They were influenced to believe that her visions were of the Devil, that Bro. White mesmerized her— that she could not have a vision in Bro. W's absence, and many other false charges were made against them. After this state of things continued for some months, I proposed to Sr. W. and Sarah her sister, who were then at their father's house in Portland, to come up to Boston, without Bro. White accompanying them, to visit the bands in Boston, Roxbury, and Randolph, and wherever the warfare against visions were manifest to convince them if possible that they had been deceived by their

teachers.  $^{57}$ Otis Nichols, handwritten manuscript, p. 4, in Ellen G. White Document File 439.  $_{GOP\ 245.3}$ 

The visit culminated in a meeting between Ellen White and Sargent and Robbins. During their meeting Ellen had a vision that lasted all afternoon. During the vision she held "the heavy open Bible in hand, and walked the room, uttering the passages of Scripture." Despite the efforts of Sargent and Robbins, they were unable to bring her out of vision. As a result, Sargent and Robbins were "silenced," although part of the group continued to oppose Ellen's prophetic ministry. Nichols noted that she denounced the two men by saying: "the curse of God would soon follow" them. Later they drifted into various forms of fanaticism. <sup>58lbid.</sup> *GOP 245.4* 

Ellen Harmon, James White, Otis Nichols, and others gradually coalesced around a group that became known as the Bridegroom Adventists because they believed in the validity of their place in Bible prophecy, most notably the "shut door" of the parable of the ten virgins (*Matt. 25:1-13*), which they viewed as characteristic of their experience. During the late 1840s and early 1850s they continued to adhere to the perpetuity of *charismata*, including healings, dreams, visions, and other forms of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the last days (*Joel 2:28-32*). Gradually they formulated a theology of spiritual gifts that centered upon the supremacy of Scripture, but allowed for the continuation of all *charismata*, including the gift of prophecy. <sup>60lbid.</sup> GOP 246.1

In 1849 James White argued "that the Bible nowhere teaches that the time has past for such special revelations; and that there is positive testimony that the church is to be blessed with special revelations 'IN THE LAST DAYS.' "As a result, "we may expect such revelations until time closes." <sup>59 James White, in The Present Truth, December 1849, 40.</sup> Rather than being a contradiction to the canon, it was precisely the canon of Scripture that created the end-time bestowal of the gift of prophecy. Perhaps the fullest development of such a perspective was published by M. E. Cornell in his 1862 booklet, *Miraculous Powers: The Scripture Testimony on the Perpetuity of Spiritual Gifts.* In this volume Cornell traced the history of various visions and miracles after the close of the New

Testament canon. Cornell appears to have overstepped his peers, though, since later expositors accepted Ellen White's visions as the only genuine manifestations of postbiblical prophecy. <sup>60Ron Graybill</sup>, "Prophet," in Ellen Harmon White, 78. GOP 246.2

Ellen White viewed her ministry within the context of the perpetuity of spiritual gifts. She eschewed the term "prophet," which she explained was because of the many individuals who had brought the title into disrepute. This may be partly a result of her own negative experience with fanatics such as Dammon, Sargent, and Robbins. It also reveals a careful distancing of her own ministry from spiritualist mediums, whom she viewed as carrying out the work of Satan. Spiritualism was of such grave concern that she kept herself at a distance from the emerging women's rights movement, whose leaders found an affinity with spiritualism. She also repudiated other movements, such as Mormonism. Altogether, she viewed her ministry and role as much broader than that of a prophet. Her counsels were not to take the place of Scripture, but to point people back to the primacy and authority of Scripture. While such continued revelations might blur the edges of canon, she affirmed the divine origins of Scripture. She believed that the source of her visions remained the same: from Jesus Christ, but in terms of their application they were a "lesser light" to lead people to the "greater light," the Bible as the Word of God. GOP 246.3

Like many of her contemporaries, she retained some of the ambiguities that came with the blurred edges of canon. For example, in A Word to the "Little Flock," there are references to the Apocrypha. Various explanations have been given for this fact, including the possibility that they were added by James White or Joseph Bates. It does not appear that she found such references disturbing. In fact, they appear to be included as informative and illuminating information, even if she did not personally elaborate on the meaning or significance of the Apocrypha. For her these were ultimately minor details, because the Word of God, the Bible, contained all that was necessary for salvation. In this sense Ellen White stands in clear contrast during a period of time when supernatural dreams and visions were commonplace. In contrast to such seers as Joseph Smith, who claimed that his visions superseded previous revelations, including the Bible, Ellen G. White

on the other hand viewed her visions as a secondary authority, subject to the authority of Scripture. Furthermore, unlike in contrast to Shakers and Spiritualists, she did not seek an inward light that would guide her beyond the boundaries of the biblical canon. She believed that she had a specific role to play to reprove and encourage God's people who were waiting for the soon return of Jesus Christ. Such radical authority came from a radical appeal to sola Scriptura. GOP 246.4

#### Conclusions

The nature and role of the Holy Spirit has been a controversial issue in the history of Christianity, but especially within the American religious experience. Winthrop S. Hudson considers the plethora of sects as characteristic of American nationalism. 61Winthrop S. Hudson, Nationalism and American Religion (New York: Harper and Row, 1970). Traditional inhibitions against dreams and visions by traditional Protestant Reformers, most notably Luther and Zwingli, had gradually become less rigid, as the boundaries of canon were blurred. This blurring process occurred as American religion developed in a unique new set of conditions. Even such seminal minds as Jonathan Edwards were cautious but allowed for the possibility of the supernatural. George Whitefield was far more open to dreams and visions, to the point that he actively encouraged and promulgated such phenomena. *GOP 247.1* 

After the American Revolution the religious landscape changed considerably, as traditional churches, which tended to be Calvinist, no longer dominated American religion. Instead Armin- ian groups, such as Methodists and Baptists, gained a large share of the religious marketplace. Mormons created their own American-made text of scripture. Waves of revivals continued from the time of Edwards, but especially so during the 1820s and 1830s during a time known as the Second Great Awakening. Visionaries became commonplace, especially by the time of the Millerite revival of the 1840s. Within American revivalism, especially during the awakenings of the early nineteenth century, claims to dreams and visions were a common phenomenon. *GOP* 247.2

As people became increasingly open to dreams and visions, new forms of radical worship also became normative. Revivalists such as Charles Finney capitalized on this by claiming direct inspiration from the Holy Spirit. Ecstatic experiences such as being "slain in the Spirit" (an expression used for being so overcome with religious emotion that a person fell to the floor) were a common feature of such revivals. Within this context it is not surprising that a radical sect of Millerite revivalists emphasized the restoration of the gift of prophecy as a defining characteristic of God's end-time church. GOP 247.3

A related issue was that of canon. Most visionaries, similar to Joseph Smith, Jr., made their revelations as a source of divine revelation either equal to or superseding the Bible. Smith set a precedent among Mormons that meant that new revelations superseded older ones. Ellen White is unique within her time because she resisted the title of prophet and, when she described her writings, did not place them on a par with the Bible. In fact, although she claimed that the revelations she received were from God, she refused to blur the edges of the canonicity of Scripture by elevating her own writings. In fact, her writings are not even an addendum or commentary on Scripture. Instead she consistently upheld the divine canonicity of Scripture. Even among some of her most loval supporters she at times had to rebuke those who tried to use her writings to settle theological debates. Unlike her peers, Ellen White clarified rather than blurred the boundaries of Scripture. GOP 248.1

## Chapter 13 - How Early Sabbathkeeping Adventists Accepted Ellen G. White as a True Prophet

Theodore N. Levterov

Seventh-day Adventist acceptance of Ellen White's prophetic gift has been one of the most controversial subjects within and without Seventh-day Adventism from the beginning of the movement until the present time. <sup>1For more</sup> detailed examination of this topic, see Theodore N. Levterov, The Development of the Seventh-day Adventist Understanding of Ellen G. White's Prophetic Gift, 1844-1889 (New York: Peter Lang, 2015). I ike many Protestant Christians, Adventists have affirmed the continuity of the doctrine of spiritual gifts. They have, however, differed from mainstream Protestantism in their claim to have the modern display of the gift of prophecy through one of their early founders—Ellen Gould Harmon (White). <sup>2After her</sup> marriage to James White in August 1846, Ellen Harmon became Ellen G. White, as she is commonly known. From their early years, Sabbathkeeping Adventists became certain that Ellen G. White possessed the true prophetic gift and defended her visionary claims. As a result, the gift of prophecy became one of their distinctive doctrines and was integrated into their theological system of beliefs. <sup>3George</sup> R. Knight, A Search for Identity: The Development of Seventh-day Adventist Beliefs (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald®, 2000), 84, 85. The doctrine of the gift of prophecy as revealed through Ellen White is still a part of the official statement of beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church today. See Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual, 18th ed. (Silver Spring, Md.: Secretariat, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2010), 162. But how did early Sabbathkeeping Adventists become convinced of the prophetic claims of Ellen White? GOP 249.1

The present chapter provides a brief historical overview of the process through which Sabbathkeeping Adventists justified and accepted the belief in the gift of prophecy as manifested through Ellen G. White. The study confines itself to the period from 1844 to 1872—the critical time when they had to take a stand concerning the calling of a modern prophet; to formulate biblical and pragmatic arguments for the doctrine of the gift of prophecy; and to integrate it into their doctrinal statement of beliefs. GOP 249.2

Part 1 gives the context and early attitudes of Sabbathkeeping Adventists toward prophetic manifestations and their initial acceptance of Ellen White's visionary claims up to 1850. Part 2 examines the period from 1851 to 1862, when Sabbathkeeping Adventists developed a stronger biblical foundation for their belief in the gift of prophecy and Ellen White because of questions and controversies within their movement. Part 3 looks at the years from 1863 to 1872, when Ellen White's prophetic gift was affirmed within the Seventh-day Adventist theology. <sup>4Each new section will concentrate</sup> only on the new developments of how Sabbathkeeping Adventists accepted and affirmed their belief in Ellen White. Repetitive arguments will not be discussed because of space. The chapter concludes with some final remarks and perspectives. *GOP* 249.3

## Accepting the Prophetic Gift: The Years Leading up to 1850

Ellen Harmon received her first vision in December 1844, a few weeks after the Great Disappointment on October 22, 1844. Although many Millerites (particularly Millerite leaders) were skeptical toward such visionary claims, the majority of Sabbathkeeping Adventists that came out of the Millerite movement after the Disappointment accepted her initial visions as genuine and began to defend what they believed to be a true display of the biblical gift of prophecy. GOP 250.1

The reason for this ready acceptance of Ellen Harmon's visions among Sabbathkeeping Adventists may not be so surprising, after all, if it is examined against the contextual background when the movement appeared 5An excellent overview of the milieu of the 1840s is given by Merlin Burt, "The Historical Background, Interconnected Development, and Integration of the Doctrines of the Sanctuary, the Sabbath, and Ellen G. White's Role in Sabbatarian Adventism From 1844 to 1849" (Ph.D. diss... Andrews University. 2002). There are at least three general perspectives that may be helpful. One important perspective is the general milieu of the nineteenth-century religious climate in America, which was open to charismatic and visionary experiences. As Nathan Hatch writes: "Scores of preachers' journals, from Methodists and Baptists, from north and south, from white and black, indicated a ready acceptance to consider dreams and visions as inspired by God, normal manifestations of divine guidance and instruction." 6Nathan O. Hatch, The Democratization of American Christianity (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1989), 10. In fact, true conversion at that time was always associated with some kind of outward manifestations of the Holy Spirit. Believers not only "expected" but also "desired" supernatural encounters with God through visions, dreams, supernatural impressions, healings, miracles, signs, and other wonders. Women and children, particularly in the Methodist tradition, were also given the opportunity to participate in worship services as they testified about their conversion experiences, which in many cases were accompanied by intense emotionalism. 7Lester Ruth, [ed.], Early Methodist Life and Spirituality (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 2005), 161. See also: Catherine A. Brekus, Strangers and Pilgrims: Female Preaching in America,

1740-1845 (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 135-137, 145. GOP 250.2

In addition, the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries witnessed the appearance of prophets (or visionaries) of all genders and conditions. Based on a scholarly survey of published sources only (pamphlets, broadsides, newspapers, literary journals, and evangelical memoirs) Susan Juster has identified about 315 men and women who were recognized as prophets in England and North America in the period between 1750 and 1820. Juster notes. however, that the real number is probably much higher since many were illiterate or did not keep a journal. While some made only brief appearances, others left enduring legacies and many followers, "sometimes numbering in the thousands." 8Susan Juster, Doomsayers: Anglo-American Prophecy in the Age of Revolution (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 22, 64. A well-known example is that of Joseph Smith and Mormonism. Interestingly, there appeared to be at least five prophets in the area of Portland, Maine, and four of them, including Ellen Harmon, were women, 9 It was in such a climate, therefore, that Sabbathkeeping Adventists had to deal with Ellen White's claim visionarv manifestations and had to consider their truthfulness.GOP 250.3

A second important perspective related to our discussion is the Christian traditions of the early founders of the Sabbathkeeping Adventist movement. Ellen White, for example, grew up as a Methodist, and as noted, emotional services and dramatic conversion experiences were not foreign to her Christian experience. The other two founders, James White and Joseph Bates, came from the Christian Connexion tradition. The goal of this movement was to reform the existing churches from unbiblical customs and to return to the purity of New Testament Christianity. The Christians, as they were commonly called, emphasized the primacy of the Bible. After all. William Kinkade (b. 1783), one of the main founders and a theologian of the movement, wrote that all of his religious beliefs were formed by simply reading the Bible "without note, comment, or marginal reference," "without the assistance of commentators" or any concordance. 10See William Kinkade, The Bible Doctrine of God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, Atonement, Faith, and Election: To Which Is Prefixed Some Thoughts on Natural Theology,

and the Truth of Revelation (New York: H. R. Piercy, 1829), iv, vi. Furthermore, according to Kinkade, at the center of the New Testament order was the doctrine of spiritual gifts, including the gift of prophecy. Based on verses such as 1 Corinthians 12:8-12 and Ephesians 4:11-16, he argued for the perpetuity of spiritual gifts until the end of time. Kinkade noted that there was "not a text in the Bible" speaking of God's intention to remove the spiritual gifts from the church after the apostolic time. <sup>11 Ibid., 333-338</sup>. This particular point of view, as we will see later, became a major argument used by Sabbathkeeping Adventists in defense of their acceptance of the prophetic gift of Ellen White. *GOP 251.1* 

A third important background perspective in order to understand the context of the Sabbath-keeping Adventist acceptance of Ellen White's gift was the Millerite attitude toward visions and charismatic manifestations before and after the Disappointment. On the one hand, charismatic expressions and various visionary manifestations were not foreign to Millerite followers, and many of their meetings were accompanied by such activities and excitement. William Ellis Foy (1818-1893), for instance, was a Free Will Baptist minister and a Millerite preacher who claimed to have received several visions during the early 1840s. <sup>12Delbert W.</sup> Baker, The Unknown Prophet, 2nd ed. (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald®, 2013). See also: William E. Foy, The Christian Experience of William E. Foy Together With the Two Visions He Received in the Months of Jan. and Feb. 1842 (Portland, [Maine]: J. and C. H. Pearson, 1845). Ellen White remembered seeing and talking to Foy, and some of their visions seemed to relate the same messages. 13Ellen G. White and C. C. Crisler, "Interview With Mrs. E. G. White, Regarding Early Experiences," manuscript 131, 1909 (Ellen G. White Estate, General Conference, Silver Spring, Md.). GOP 251.2

On the other hand, the Millerite leadership was skeptical and condemned such occurrences as dangerous and unbiblical. <sup>14See</sup> Francis D. Nichol, The Midnight Cry: A Defense of the Character and Conduct of William Miller and the Millerites, Who Mistakenly Believed That the Second Coming of Christ Would Take Place in the Year 1844 (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald®, <sup>1944</sup>), <sup>321-354</sup>. They even issued general conference declarations stating that they had "no confidence whatever in any visions, dreams, or private revelations." <sup>15</sup>"Declaration of Principles,"

Midnight Cry, June 15, 1843, 112. Other examples include: "Address of the Conference," Advent Herald, June 5, 1844, 141; "Address to the Public," Midnight Cry, Nov. 21, 1844, 166; "Conference of Adventists at New York," Morning Watch, May 15, 1845, 158. George Knight is right in pointing out that their rejection, especially after the Great Disappointment, may be seen as a reaction against some extreme forms of religious excitement displayed by the so-called Spiritualizers, as well as by other religious groups such as the Shakers and the Mormons led by a prophetic figure. 16George R. Knight, Millennial Fever and the End of the World: A Study of Millerite Adventism (Boise, Idaho: Pacific Press®, 1993), 245-<sup>293</sup> Ellen White, according to the Millerites, belonged to that category. 17See P. Gerard Damsteegt, Foundation of the Seventh-day Adventist Message and Mission (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 1995), 111, 121. Damsteegt notes that although "Ellen Harmon's revelations seem to have been 'well known, and much talked about at that time,' most [Millerite] Adventists remained rather skeptical of visions." Sabbathkeeping Adventists, like the Millerites, did not deny the existence of extreme and false prophetic displays, they were also convinced that there were true occurrences of the prophetic gift. Thus they were set to defend Ellen White's visions as being genuine manifestations supported by the Scriptures. GOP 252.1

The purpose of their initial arguments, therefore, was twofold: (a) to establish the biblical authority of her prophetic gift, and (b) to distinguish her gift from what they considered "false prophets," Spiritualizers, and other fanatical elements that existed in abundance during the mid-nineteenth century. Although not all Sabbathkeeping Adventists accepted Ellen White in the beginning, her prophetic influence gradually grew and her gift was progressively received as being genuine and authentic. By the late 1840s the Sabbatarians developed four biblical arguments with some practical applications. A brief overview of each of these initial arguments follows. <sup>18The list provided here is made for clarity purposes only. The majority of articles in these early years clustered the argumentations together without necessarily making such obvious distinctions GOP 252.2</sup>

First, they argued that the Bible provided enough scriptural evidence to support the modern display of the gift of prophecy. As early as 1845 James White wrote that there is no safe place for a

servant of Jesus Christ to plant his feet, but on the truths of the Bible. It is true we may expect glorious manifestations of God's Spirit; and I think the Bible warrants us in looking for visions, and those who may be discerners of spirits, even in the last days of time. But in such case we can judge alone by their fruits. There is one Sister in Maine who has had a clear vision of the Advent people traveling to the City of God. <sup>19 James White, "Letter From Bro. White," Day-Star, Sept. 6, 1845, 17. (Italics supplied.) GOP 252.3</sup>

Again, in 1847, when he published Ellen White's first vision in A Word to the "Little Flock," the first joined Sabbatarian publication, James White included more than 80 Bible references within the original text of the vision in order to point out that its message was in accordance with the Bible and its teachings. <sup>20[James White, Ellen G. White, and Joseph Bates], A Word to the "Little Flock" ([Gorham, Maine: James White], 1847), 14-18. Not surprisingly, James White's arguments mirrored his Christian tradition of the "Bible alone" principle and the belief that the Bible supported the modern display of the gifts of the Spirit. *GOP 253.1*</sup>

Joseph Bates also made a similar declaration in his book *A Seal of the Living God*, published in 1849, when he noted that those who had "no faith in visions . . . may as well say they have no faith in the bible; for some, yea, many of the most wonderful scenes, and also promises made to the church of God have come to us through visions." <sup>21</sup>Joseph Bates, A Seal of the Living God: A Hundred Forty-four Thousand, of the Servants of God Being Sealed, in 1849 (New Bedford, [Mass.]: Benjamin Lindsey, 1849), 27, 28. Thus, early Sabbathkeeping Adventists believed that the Bible confirmed the modern manifestation of the gift of prophecy and Ellen White's gift was a part of this phenomenon. *GOP* 253.2

A second reason Sabbathkeeping Adventists accepted Ellen White's vision in the 1840s was related to the *eschaton* or the "last days." This argument was built upon the Pentecost episode in *Acts* 2:17-20 in connection with the last days' prophecy in Joel 2 (see *Joel 2:28-30*). Contrary to the general Christian belief that the prophetic gift ended with the apostle John, the Sabbathkeeping Adventists argued that the gifts, including the prophetic gift, were to

continue until the end of time. It was to be visible in the "last days" of human history, the precise time they believed they were living in *GOP 253.3* 

James White saw the "last days" argument (based on Joel 2 and Acts 2) as one of the strongest points for accepting Ellen White's gift. According to his understanding, the prophecy of Joel was not fulfilled in its entirety at Pentecost. He argued that the signs in the sun and the moon were not seen on that day. Nor were there any dreams or visions. Thus only "a part of this prophecy was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost," and "all" was to be fulfilled in the "last days." Since James White interpreted "the last days" to be the period when they were living in, he believed that the "time has fully come" when believers were to expect "dreams and visions from the Lord." 22A Word to the "Little Flock," 13; See also James White, "Brother Miller's Dream," Present Truth, May 1850, 73. Interestingly, a few years later he offered "a reward of \$500" to anyone who could "find one text in the New Testament which teaches that the gifts have been by divine authority taken from the church." <sup>23[James White]</sup>, "Perpetuity of Spiritual Gifts," Review and Herald, Feb. 11, 1862, 84. Obviously James White believed that nobody could do that and he would not lose his money. GOP 253.4

Like James White, Joseph Bates also affirmed that the Bible was "positively clear" on the fact that God would give visions to His people "in the last days." <sup>24Bates, A Seal of the Living God, 31.</sup> Therefore, if Sabbathkeeping Adventists were living in the last days of human history, as they believed they were, then the gift of prophecy, as seen through Ellen White, was to be expected. This argument seemed to become one of the most popular and highly used reasons for justification of the Sabbatarian acceptance of Ellen White ever since. *GOP* 253.5

A third more practical reason for the Sabbathkeeping Adventist acceptance of Ellen White's gift developed during this early period was the positive influence of her visions among believers or what they called the "good fruits" argument. By its very nature, this argument was more pragmatic then theological and was based primarily on personal experiences of believers with Ellen White. We

must note also that while a majority of Sabbathkeeping Adventists accepted Ellen White's gift, there were some who were doubtful. But through personal examination and by seeing the "good fruits" of the visions (individually and communally) they gradually accepted Ellen White's prophetic claims as authentic. *GOP 254.1* 

Maybe the most famous example is that of Joseph Bates, one of the founders of the movement. Bates commented about his experience with Ellen White: "It is now about two years since I first saw the author, and heard her relate the substance of her visions as she has since published them in Portland (April 6, 1846). Although I could see nothing in them that militated against the word, yet I felt alarmed and tried exceedingly, and for a long time unwilling to believe that it was anything more than what was produced by a protracted debilitated state of her body." <sup>25 Joseph Bates, "Remarks,"</sup> in A Word to the "Little Flock," 21. GOP 254 2

Bates's declaration is rather surprising since he came from the Christian Connexionist tradition, which was open to the perpetuity of spiritual gifts. But it is also because of his tradition that he left open the possibility that Ellen White might be manifesting the true prophetic gift. As he put it: "I am a doubting Thomas. I do not believe in visions. But if I could believe that the testimony the sister has related to-night was indeed the voice of God to us, I should be the happiest man alive.' "26Quoted in Ellen G. White, Life Sketches of Ellen G. White (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press®, 1915), 95. GOP 254.3

Perplexed, Bates tried to investigate the matter for himself and "sought opportunities in presence of others . . . to question, and cross question her, and her friends which accompanied her, . . . to get if possible at the truth." <sup>27Bates</sup>, "Remarks," <sup>21</sup>. Bates's personal conviction of the legitimacy of Ellen White's prophetic gift came in November 1846 in Topsham, Maine, "when Ellen White had a vision that included astronomical data" describing other planets. <sup>28George R.</sup> Knight, Joseph Bates: The Real Founder of Seventh-day Adventism (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald®,2004), <sup>97</sup>. Being an ex-sea captain and having a particular interest on the topic, Bates was well familiar with the astronomical data of that time. <sup>29See</sup> Joseph Bates, The Opening Heavens: Or a Connected View of the Testimony of the Prophets and

Apostles, Concerning the Opening Heavens Compared With Astronomical Observations: And of the Present and Future Location of the New Jerusalem, the Paradise of God (New Bedford, [Mass.]: Benjamin Lindsey, 1846), 6-31. The vision bore the astronomical data known up to that time. Seventh-day Adventists do not believe its factual data today. Since he knew that Ellen White could not have had any previous knowledge of astronomy, he became at once convinced that this vision came "outside of her knowledge and control." 30J. N. Loughborough, "Recollections of the Past—No. 16," Review and Herald, Nov. 30, 1886, 745; Ellen G. White, Spiritual Gifts, vol. 2 (Battle Creek, Mich.: James White, 1860), 83. Following that personal experience Bates became a believer in her prophetic gift. *GOP* 254.4

Similarly, Heman S. Gurney also noted that after some personal investigation, and seeing and benefiting from some of the "fruits" of her prophetic work, he accepted her gift as being genuine. Interestingly, Gurney paid half of the cost for printing a broadside containing her first vision in 1846. <sup>31See</sup> H. S. Gurney, "Recollections of Early Advent Experience," Review and Herald, Jan. 3, 1888, 2. The vision was published in a broadside dated April 6, 1846. GOP 255.1

Another "good fruit" of the modern manifestation of the gift of prophecy was its ability to bring believers into "the unity of the faith" and strengthen them spiritually. Otis Nichols, for example, used this argument in his letter to William Miller in 1846. He pointed out that when Ellen White's visions were "received as from the Lord" they "broke down and melted their hearts like little children, fed, comforted, strengthened the weak, and encouraged them to hold on to the faith, and the 7th month movement." Contrarily, he noted that those who had rejected her messages "very soon fell into the world and a nominal faith." 32Otis Nichols to William Miller, Apr. 20, 1846 (Heritage Research Center, Loma Linda University, Calif.).

The unifying power of Ellen White's gift was also seen at some of the early Sabbath conference meetings that took place in the late 1840s. For instance, at the second Sabbatarian conference at Volney, New York, in August 1848, there was a vast difference of understanding of biblical doctrines. At one point Ellen White received a vision in which she saw "some of the errors of those present, and also the truth in contrast with their errors." As a result

of her vision, unity was achieved and "truth gained the victory." 33Ellen G. White, Spiritual Gifts, vol. 2, 97-99. This is not to assume, of course, that Ellen White had a leading role in the formation of the Seventh-day Adventist beliefs. As George Knight has pointed out: "We can best view Mrs. White's role in doctrinal development as confirmation rather than initiation." 34George R. Knight, A Brief History of Seventh-day Adventists, 2nd ed. (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald®, 2004), 37. (Italics supplied.) After all, Ellen White had always considered her gift as being "a lesser light" leading people to "the greater light"—the Bible. 35Ellen G. White, Selected Messages From the Writings of Ellen G. White, book 3 (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald®, 1958, 1980), 30. But seeing the unifying force and the "good fruits" of her gift was another reason for early Sabbathkeepers to accept her prophetic claims as authentic and sincere. GOP 255.3

A fourth argument that Sabbathkeeping Adventists were initially inclined to accept Ellen White's gift was related to the existence of counterfeit prophets. Like the Millerite Adventists, they did not deny the reality of "false prophets," but this, they claimed, did not negate the manifestation of the true gift of prophecy. On the contrary, false prophets only confirmed their belief that there were "true ones." <sup>36Bates, A Seal of the Living God, 31.</sup> The question for Sabbathkeeping Adventists, therefore, was not the reality of "modern" displays of the gift of prophecy, but how to distinguish between true and false prophetic manifestations. The identifying mark, they believed, was the nature of prophetic messages in comparison with the Bible and their fulfillments. *GOP 255.4* 

Otis Nichols clearly had this in mind when he wrote to Miller that Christians had a duty not to reject "prophesyings" but to "prove all things" and to "hold fast that which is good. 1 Thessalonians 5:20, 21." Trying to convince Miller of Ellen White's genuine prophetic gift Nichols noted that her first vision was an accurate fulfillment of what the Millerites went through during the Great Disappointment in 1844 (as far as he and the Sabbathkeeping Adventists were concerned). It was also in accordance with the biblical record. <sup>37Otis Nichols to William Miller, Apr. 20, 1846. GOP 256.1</sup>

Bates wrote in the same manner concerning the Sabbathkeepers'

understanding on the issue of true and false prophets. He, like Nichols, argued against those who believed that all visions were to be considered as false manifestations. "We are commanded to try the spirits," Bates wrote in 1849, "that we may understand which is right. So also to try visions by proving all things and holding fast that which is good." Then Bates became more specific and pointed out how Ellen White's visions were "clearly" in "accord with God's Word and Second Advent history." <sup>38Bates, A Seal of the Living God, 27</sup>. Based on their truthfulness, he implied that Ellen White was a true and genuine prophet of God. *GOP 256.2* 

James White, likewise, argued for the validity of their belief in the gift of prophecy based on the existence of the counterfeits. He logically noted that those who rejected "such special revelations because the counterfeit exists, may with equal propriety go a little farther and deny that God ever revealed himself to man in a dream or a vision, for the counterfeit always existed." <sup>39 James White, "Brother Miller's Dream," 73. GOP 256.3</sup>

Thus by 1850, Sabbathkeeping Adventists had accepted the prophetic ministry of Ellen White by pointing out to: (a) its biblical confirmation; (b) being a manifestation of the Holy Spirit in the "last days"; (c) bringing "positive fruits" among believers; and (d) differentiating it from counterfeit prophetic manifestations at that time. Ellen White's gift during this early period, however, was seen more as a "sign" rather than a doctrine in itself. 40Alberto R. Timm, The Sanctuary and the Three Angels' Messages: Integrating Factors in the Development of Seventh-day Adventist Doctrines, Adventist Theological Society Dissertation Series, vol. 5 (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Adventist Theological Society Publications, 1995), 105. During the next two decades. Sabbathkeeping Adventists continued to build upon their initial arguments and defend further their acceptance of Ellen White, the gift of prophecy would become one of their distinguished doctrinal teachings. GOP 256.4

# Defending the Prophetic Gift, 1851-1862

During the 1850s and the beginning of 1860s Sabbathkeeping Adventists faced new challenges related to Ellen White's gift. These came partly because of *internal* controversies and the appearance of the first offshoots, the *Messenger* party and the "age-to-come" movements, over the validity of Ellen White's prophetic claims. Although the controversies seemed to be initially personal in character, the objections rose to the level of a theological debate. *GOP* 256.5

The *Messenger* party emerged in 1853 as a result of a critical vision that Ellen White had toward H. S. Case and C. P. Russell, two Adventist ministers from Jackson, Michigan. Since they did not like the vision, they rejected Ellen White's gift as false and unreliable. J. M. Stephenson and D. P. Hall in Wisconsin led the "age-to-come" group. The two men were first-day Adventist ministers who angel's third accepted the message and Sabbathkeepers, but continued to hold to the "age-to-come" theory. They believed that probation did not end with the Second Advent but continued during the "age-to-come," or the millennium. When their views were refuted in the pages of the Review and Herald. 41Some examples of articles critical of the "Age to Come" theory are: Uriah Smith, "The Sanctuary," Review and Herald, Apr. 4, 1854, 84-86; James White, "The 'Age to Come,' " Review and Herald, Dec. 11, 1855, 84, 85; R. F. Cottrell, "The Age to Come," Review and Herald, Sept. 3, 1861, 108. Stephenson and the Messenger party and turned against the ioined Hall Sabbathkeepers and the visions of Ellen White. Eventually Stephenson and Hall renounced their belief in the Sabbath and lost most of their followers among the Sabbathkeeping believers. 42J. N. Loughborough, Rise and Progress of the Seventh-Day Adventists: With Tokens of God's Hand in the Movement and a Brief Sketch of the Advent Cause From 1831 to 1844 (Battle Creek, Mich.: General Conference Assn. of the Seventh-day Adventists, 1892), 204-209; Richard W. Schwarz, Light Bearers to the Remnant (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press®, 1979), 92. GOP 256 6

The dissident groups began to publish their views in the *Messenger* of *Truth*, the first significant periodical critical of the Sabbatarian group and their acceptance of Ellen White's visions. <sup>43There are three</sup>

extant issues of this periodical—those of Oct. 19, Nov. 2, and Nov. 30, 1854. Along with the already examined questions from the previous period 44The critics claimed that the Bible did not support the modern manifestation of the gift of prophecy; that Joel 2 was fulfilled at the day of the Pentecost (Acts 2); and that the "fruits" of the visions were negative and brought divisions. the detractors offered several somewhat new arguments against the Sabbathkeeping position on Ellen White. First, they charged them of having another rule of faith—the vision, which was contrary to the sola Scriptura principle that Sabbath believers had claimed to uphold. <sup>45</sup>[C. P. Russell], "Forgive One Another," Messenger of Truth, Oct. 19, 1854; A. N. Seymour, "Delusion-E. White's Visions," Advent Harbinger and Bible Advocate, Mar. 26, 1853, 323. Furthermore, the opposition claimed that the "testimony of Jesus" in Revelation 12:17 had nothing to do with the gift of prophecy in relation to the "remnant" people of God, as Sabbathkeeping believers uphold, but that it referred to the spirit of Christ in general. 46R. R. Chapin, "Who Are the Remnant?" Messenger of Truth, Oct. 19, 1854. Third, they accused Sabbathkeepers of making the visions a test of fellowship. 47See, for example: J. B. Bezzo, "Test of Fellowship," Messenger of Truth, Oct. 19, 1854. And fourth, they believed that Ellen White was from the wrong sex to claim prophetic manifestations. 48See, for example: Mary A. Seymour, "Seventh-day Sabbath," Advent Harbinger and Bible Advocate, Jan. 31, 1852, 264. Although this objection did not seem to be widespread in the 1850s, it would appear again and again during the next decades. Sabbathkeeping Adventists had to respond to the new questions and defend further their acceptance of Ellen White's gift. In the process, their belief in gift of prophecy became the much more concrete and solidified.GOP 257.1

As a response to the first objections related to the "Bible alone" principle, the Sabbathkeeping Adventists did not offer, in general, anything new. However, the new accusations helped them to clarify their position regarding the relationship between the Bible and Ellen White's prophetic gift as they explained further its dynamics. In 1851 James White published the first extensive article justifying the Sabbatarian belief in the gift of prophecy. Although based on already established arguments, a main element of the article gave White's explanation of the relationship between the Bible and the

gifts, especially the gift of prophecy. Without giving any doubt about the Sabbatarian understanding on the issue, he noted that the gifts of the Spirit should all have their proper places. The Bible is an everlasting rock. *GOP* 257.2

It is our rule of faith and practice. . . . Every Christian is therefore in duty bound to take the Bible as a perfect rule of faith and duty. He should pray fervently to be aided by the Holy Spirit in searching the Scriptures for the whole truth, and for his whole duty. He is not at liberty to turn from them to learn his duty through any of the gifts. We say that the very moment he does, he places the gifts in a wrong place, and takes an extremely dangerous position. The Word should be in front, and the eye of the church should be placed upon it, as the rule to walk by, and the fountain of wisdom from which to learn duty in "all good works." But if a portion of the church err from the truths of the Bible, and become weak, and sickly, and the flock become scattered, so that it seems necessary for God to employ the gifts of the Spirit to correct, revive and heal the erring, we should let him work. <sup>49</sup>James White, "The Gifts of the Gospel Church," Review and Herald, Apr. 21, 1851, 70. (Italics supplied.) GOP 258.1

Clearly, for James White and Sabbathkeepers, the Bible was their only guide for belief and doctrine. The gifts were never given for that purpose. On the contrary, the aim of the gifts was to lead people to the Bible and its teachings. Thus the "gifts of the Spirit" had corrective and assisting functions, but they were never considered on par with the Bible. GOP 258.2

James White reemphasized the sola *Scriptura* principle when he republished the article in 1854 after the *Messenger* controversy. In his explanatory note he stated that the reason for republishing it, was that "our readers may see for themselves what our position has ever been on this subject." "The position that the Bible and the Bible alone, is the rule of faith and duty," James continued, "does not shut out the gifts which God set in the church. To reject them is shutting out that part of the Bible which presents them. We say, Let us have a whole Bible, and let that, and that alone, be our rule of faith and duty. Place the gifts where they belong and all is harmony." <sup>50 James</sup> White, "Gifts of the Gospel Church," Review and Herald, Oct. 3, 1854, 61, 62. *GOP 258.3* 

Ellen White also affirmed the Sabbatarian position on the relationship between the Bible and her prophetic gift when she wrote in 1851: "I recommend to you, dear reader, the word of God as the rule of your faith and practice. By that Word we are to be judged. God has, in that Word, promised to give visions in the 'LAST DAYS'; not for a new rule of faith, but for the comfort of his people, and to correct those who err from bible truth." <sup>51Ellen G.</sup> White, A Sketch of the Christian Experience and Views of Ellen G. White (Saratoga Springs, N.Y.: James White, 1851), 64. Later on, when some believers tried to use her gift for guidance instead of going to the Bible, she advised: *GOP 258.4* 

Many come to us with the inquiry: Shall I do this? Shall I engage in that enterprise? Or, in regard to dress, Shall I wear this or that article? I answer them: You profess to be disciples of Christ. Study your Bibles. Read carefully and prayerfully the life of our dear Saviour when he dwelt among men upon the earth. Imitate His life, and you will not be found straying from the narrow path. We utterly refuse to be conscience for you. If we tell you just what you must do, you will look to us to guide you, instead of going directly to Jesus for yourselves. <sup>52Ellen</sup> G. White, Testimonies for the Church (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press®, 1948), 2:119. GOP 259.1

According to Sabbathkeepers, therefore, the Bible was superior to the gifts. Ellen White's messages bore divine origin, but they were not considered equal to the Bible. At the same time, there was a sufficient biblical evidence for the existence of the prophetic gift to the end of the ages. To deny that was to reject parts of the biblical record. *GOP* 259.2

One other interesting observation of the relationship between the Bible and Ellen White during the early 1850s was the decision of Sabbathkeeping Adventists to avoid publishing Ellen White's visions in the *Review and Herald*, their main publication. <sup>53See the note by J. N. Andrews, R. F. Cottrell, and Uriah Smith, "To the Readers of the Advent Review," Review and Herald, Nov. 7, 1854, 101. On the one hand, this seemed to be a reaction against the accusations that Sabbathkeeping Adventist had "another rule of faith." On the other hand, James White desired to make the *Review and Herald* a</sup>

powerful tool for evangelism. He recognized that the attitude of many of the former Millerites, who became indifferent toward their belief in the second coming of Christ, had started to change. Thus in August 1851 he wrote, "Now the door is open almost everywhere to present the truth, and many are prepared to read the publications who have formerly had no interest to investigate. Now we may all do something for the Lord who has done so much for us." <sup>54 James</sup> White, "Our Present Work," Review and Herald, Aug. 19, 1851, 13. GOP 259 3

Consequently, James White decided not to promote Ellen White's visions in the Review, but to publish them in separate special issues, called *Review and Herald Extra*, intended only for Sabbathkeeping believers. In its inaugural edition, in July 1851, he explained that since "many are prejudiced against visions, we think best at present not to insert anything of the kind in the regular paper [Review and Herald]. We will therefore publish the visions by themselves for the benefit of those who believe that God can fulfill his word and give visions 'in the last days.' " 55[James White], Review and Herald Extra, July 21, 1851, 4. Intriguingly, however, we do not find any additional publications of the *Review and Herald Extra* What did happen? GOP 259.4

Apparently, certain believers offered to pay for the publication of *A Sketch of the Christian Experience and Views of Ellen G. White, a small pamphlet containing the earlier visions of Ellen White.* <sup>56Ellen</sup> G. White, A Sketch of the Christian Experience and Views of Ellen G. White (Saratoga Springs, N.Y.: James White, 1851). Then in 1854 a Supplement to the Christian Experience and Views of Ellen G. White was published. <sup>57Ellen</sup> G. White, Supplement to the Christian Experience and Views of Ellen G. White (Rochester, N.Y.: James White, 1854). *GOP* 259.5

A year later, in 1855, Ellen White's testimonies also began to be printed individually in a small booklet format. The 1851 and 1854 booklets and the publication of the testimonies obviously proved to be the substitute for the *Review and Herald Extra.GOP 260.1* 

While there were some legitimate reasons behind the decision not to publish Ellen White in the Review, this action also brought some undesirable consequences, as Sabbathkeeping leaders

acknowledged a few years later. First, it seemed that while they professed a belief in Ellen White's gift they showed a "timid spirit" in acknowledging it publicly. Second, such a decision led to a spiritual decline and negligence toward the gift of prophecy on the part of some believers. The Adventist leadership realized that change was needed. This came at the general conference in 1855. GOP 260.2

The delegates, who gathered at Battle Creek, appointed a committee composed of Joseph Bates, J. H. Waggoner, and M. E. Cornell "to address the saints in behalf of the conference on the gifts of the church." 58"Business Proceedings of the Conference at Battle Creek, Mich.," Review and Herald, Dec. 4, 1855, 76. The main concern, of course, was not the gifts in general, but the gift of prophecy in particular. The committee acted immediately and made their report to the leaders on the same day. Interestingly, they did not deal with apologetics concerning the gift of prophecy but suggested primarily practical application related to their attitude toward the visions of Ellen White. "Dear Brethren and Sisters in Christ," the committee observed, GOP 260.3

while we have professed to stand upon the Word, and walk in "the whole counsel of God," we feel to confess that we as a people have not obeyed the above divine injunction, nor have we appreciated the glorious privilege of claiming the gifts which our blessed Master has vouchsafed to his people . . . . While we hold these views [the visions] as emanating from the divine Mind, we would confess the inconsistency (which we believe has been displeasing to God) of professedly regarding them as messages from God, and really putting them on a level with the inventions of men. We fear that this has resulted from an unwillingness to bear the reproach of Christ (which is indeed greater riches than the treasures of earth), and a desire to conciliate the feelings of our opponents; but the Word and our own experience have taught us that God is not honored, nor his cause advanced, by such a course." 59Joseph Bates, J. H. Waggoner, and M. E. Cornell, "Address of the Conference Assembled at Battle Creek, Mich., Nov. 16th, 1855," Review and Herald, Dec. 4, 1855, 79. See also: "Conference Address," Review and Herald, July 24, 1856, 94. GOP 260 4

The committee's response obviously reflected the *Messenger* controversy, which caused a lot of disunity and stir among churches

and believers. Sabbathkeepers were ready for a new direction in their attitude toward the visions of Ellen White and their publicity. The intended change, however, did not come immediately. Sabbathkeeping Adventists continued to be cautious because of outside prejudices against Ellen White's gift and its relationship to the Bible. It took them another decade until a complete change of direction concerning publicizing Ellen White's messages would take place. 60The result was an intentional promotion of Ellen White's books and testimonies. In the late 1860s James White also established a special "book fund" to be used for printing and distribution of Ellen White's writings for those who could not afford to buy them. The 1855 conference, nevertheless, became a turning point in the new direction. *GOP 260.5* 

The relationship between the Bible and Ellen White's prophetic writings continued to be argued beyond the 1850s. But Seventh-day Adventism, including Ellen White, had always pointed out the supremacy of the Bible and had always made a distinction between the function of the Bible and the purpose of the gifts. *GOP 261.1* 

A second point made by Sabbathkeeping Adventists in relation to their acceptance of the gift of prophecy during this period was their interpretation of *Revelation 12:17*. The Sabbathkeeping Adventists disagreed with the interpretation offered by their critics and made two important observations. First, they stated the gift of prophecy was a necessary characteristic and an "identifying mark" of God's end-time people, what they called the "remnant." And second, they argued that *Revelation 12:17* had to be interpreted in light of *Revelation 19:10*. Thus James White wrote that "God has by the prophet Joel promised to do great things for the REMNANT" just before His coming. "It is the remnant that is to witness these things," he continued. "It is the remnant (or last portion of the church) that keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ (which is the spirit of prophecy, Rev xix, 10)." 61 James White, "Peter's Testimony," Review and Herald, Oct. 16, 1855, 61 GOP 261 2

Using the same connection, B. F. Robbins noted that when the apostle John "saw the remnant mentioned in this prophecy [Rev. 12:17]," he revealed "their peculiar characteristics so that they need not be mistaken amid the multitude of nominal Christians." "How is this remnant characterized?" Robbins asked. "By keeping the

commandments of God," and by "having the testimony of Jesus Christ," which is the "spirit of prophecy." <sup>62B. F. Robbins,</sup> "Joel II, 28-32," Review and Herald, Apr. 12, 1860, 165. This interpretation, thereafter, became a standard proof of the general Sabbatarian understanding that the true remnant people of God had to possess the gift of prophecy and that Ellen White's gift was a legitimate confirmation of their claim to be "the remnant." <sup>63See</sup>, for example: James White, "Unity and Gifts of the Church. No. 3," Review and Herald, Dec. 31, 1857, 60, 61; R. F. Cottrell, "Spiritual Gifts," Review and Herald, Mar. 24, 1859, 137-139; [James White], "Perpetuity of Spiritual Gifts," Review and Herald, Feb. 25, 1862, 100. GOP 261.3

A third important question discussed during this period was the whether the gift of prophecy should be considered a test of fellowship. Although Sabbath believers were not officially organized until 1863, the question came into discussion by the mid-1850s mainly because of the Messengers and the "age-to-come" controversies. The critics noted that many former believers who were part of the Sabbathkeeping group were denied fellowship because they questioned or expressed unbelief in the visions of Ellen White. Sabbathkeeping Adventists, including Ellen White, however, denied that they had ever made Ellen White's gift of prophecy a test of fellowship. GOP 261.4

James White set the initial understanding in 1855. He refuted the charge of the objectors entirely. "There is a class of persons," he wrote, "who are determined to have it that the REVIEW and its conductors make the views of Mrs. White a test of doctrine and Christian fellowship. It may be duty to notice these persons on account of the part they are acting, which is calculated to deceive some." 64James White, "A Test," Review and Herald, Oct. 16, 1855, 61. White then quoted a statement written by a Sabbatarian group (most probably the Battle Creek believers) concerning their attitude toward the visions of Ellen White: "This certifies that we have been acquainted with Bro. and Sr. White, and their teachings, and labors in church trials, and have never known them to urge the visions on any one as a portion of religious faith, or make them a test of fellowship." Furthermore, James White noted that all of the beliefs held by the Sabbathkeepers "were brought out from the Scriptures

before Mrs. [White] had any view in regard to them." He then went on to accuse the critics as being the ones who made the visions a test. While the Sabbatarian leaders were engaged in teaching the Word of God, the objectors were busy dividing and separating churches by criticizing Ellen White and her visions. <sup>65Ibid., 61, 62.</sup> (Italics supplied.) Thus Sabbathkeeping Adventists made it clear that the Bible, not the visions, was their "test" and "rule of fellowship." *GOP 261.5* 

The test question was refined further as Sabbathkeeping Adventists continued to explore its relationship to the gift of prophecy during the late 1850s. One important nuance was the difference that they began to make between two groups of believers: those who accepted Ellen White's gift and those who were unsure or doubted her gift. When some expressed concerns that the visions were not considered a test, James White made a slightly different statement than previously and wrote: *GOP 262.1* 

To say unqualifiedly that they are a test, and carry out the principle with those who know nothing of their teachings, spirit and fruit, at the time when the world is full of manifestations as near the genuine as Satan can get up, would be the wildest fanaticism. On the other hand, for those who profess to believe them to say they will in no wise be tested by them, is most irrational. . . . I believe them to be the property of the church, and a test to those who believe them from Heaven. <sup>66</sup>Hiram Bingham, "From Bro. Bingham," Review and Herald, Feb. 14, 1856, 158. See James White's reply to the letter of Hiram Bingham. *GOP* 262.2

As such, James White began to view the visions as a test but only for those who accepted Ellen White's gift as having a divine origin. GOP 262.3

In 1861 Uriah Smith came up with a new nuance on the "test" issue when he made a distinction between the doctrine of spiritual gifts and the specific gift of Ellen White. While Smith saw the belief in spiritual gifts to be a test of fellowship, he did not consider Ellen White's specific gift as such. <sup>67</sup>Uriah Smith, "The Visions a Test," Review and Herald, Jan. 14, 1861, 52. Thus Sabbathkeeping Adventists made various modifications on the "test" question. But what is remarkable

to note is that the first Sabbatarian leaders, including Ellen White, were willing to show a spirit of tolerance toward people who were honestly searching for the truth concerning the gift of prophecy. As Ellen White wrote: *GOP 262.4* 

There should be no trial or labor with those who have never seen the individual having visions, and who have had no personal knowledge of the influence of the visions. Such should not be deprived of the benefits and privileges of the church, if their Christian course is otherwise correct, and they have formed a good Christian character Such must not be set aside, but long patience and brotherly love should be exercised toward them until they find their position and become established for or against. <sup>68Ellen G. White,</sup> Testimonies for the Church, 1:328. GOP 262.5

Believers, of course, were expected to accept Ellen White's gift as genuine after examining it. At the same time, those who had "no knowledge" of her visions but blindly fought against them and caused unnecessary divisions were to be disfellowshipped for the sake of unity among believers. Evidently the approach in dealing with people who doubted her visions depended on their honesty and sincerity. <sup>69See, for example, ibid., 328-330.</sup> Because of its complexity, the "test" question continued to be discussed and examined in subsequent years. *GOP 263.1* 

Another concern that Sabbathkeeping Adventists had to address in this period was the "gender" objection to Ellen White's gift. This argument did not appear to be so controversial during the 1850s as in the later years. Nevertheless, it seemed that it was a sufficiently important issue that Sabbathkeeping Adventists felt they needed to address by publishing multiple articles on the issue. GOP 263.2

As early as 1855, David Arnold noted that based on Joel 2 God's plan was "to 'pour out his Spirit,' not only upon the sons, but also upon the daughters,' and they shall prophesy." The gift of prophecy, Arnold argued, did not depend upon one's gender. <sup>70David Arnold,</sup> "The Oneness of the Church and the Means of God's Appointment for Its Purification and Unity,"Review and Herald, June 26, 1855, 250. S. C. Welcome also wrote a major piece on the "gender" question in 1860. After a lengthy examination of 1 Corinthians 14:34, 35 ("Let

your women keep silence in the churches, for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience as also saith the law. And if they will learn anything let them ask their husbands at home; for it is a shame for women to speak in the church."), Welcome noted that the passage had nothing to do with the gift of prophecy but with certain order in the churches at Corinth. He then gave numerous examples from the Bible of female prophets<sup>71His list included Miriam, Deborah, Huldah, Anna, Elizabeth (the mother of John the Baptist), Priscilla, and others. and concluded: *GOP 263.3*</sup>

We are informed on the authority of divine revelation that male and female are one in Christ Jesus; that in the relation in which they both stand to him, the distinction is as completely broken down as between Jew and Gentile, bond and free. Thus revelation has made known the important truth, and reason will bear testimony to the same thing. . . . Then let no stumbling block be thrown in their [female] way, but let them fill the place that God calls them to fill, let them not be bound down to silence by church rules, but let their tongues speak forth the praises of God, and let them point sinners to the Lamb of God, and grieve not the holy Spirit by silence in the congregation. <sup>72S</sup>. C. Welcome, "Shall the Women Keep Silence in the Churches?" Review and Herald, Feb. 23, 1860, 110. GOP 263 4

Although Welcome did not mention Ellen White specifically, his intent to defend her prophetic gift despite her gender was evident. GOP 264.1

Similarly, D. T. Bourdeau noted that according to numerous examples from the Bible, <sup>73Bourdeau</sup> quoted such biblical passages as Philippians 4:3; Romans 16:3; Acts 18:2, 26; Titus 2:3; 1 Corinthians 15:5, 16-18; 1 Corinthians 14:23-31; Acts 21:8, 9; 1 Corinthians 14:3, 4; Luke 2; and Hebrews <sup>10:25.</sup> it was "lawful for women to speak in meetings, and that our [Seventh-day Adventist] position in regard to the gift of prophecy that is among us, is not invalidated" by the biblical account. He went on to say that "the most pious and consecrated among us testify that they have been blessed" by the visions manifested among us, and that "the same influence that attended the word that converted them, attended the visions." <sup>74D.</sup> T. Bourdeau, "Spiritual Gifts," Review and

Herald, Dec. 2, 1862, 6: Hence Sabbathkeeping believers argued that according to the biblical evidence women had the right to the gift of prophecy as much as men. GOP 264.2

By the beginning of the 1860s Sabbathkeeping Adventists had a well-formulated biblical and theological position concerning the prophetic gift. The first controversies did not shake but rather gave Sabbathkeeping Adventists an opportunity to defend and explain further their acceptance of Ellen White. The new denomination continued to affirm its belief in modern manifestation of the gift of prophecy in the following years, and it became a part of their overall theological platform. *GOP* 264.3

# Affirming the Prophetic Gift, 1863-1872

During the years from 1863 to 1872 Seventh-day Adventists continued to deal with critics of their acceptance of Ellen White's gift. On the one hand, the church had to respond to B. F. Snook and W. H. Brinkerhoff who became the first Seventh-day Adventist ministers to leave the church over issues related to Ellen White's prophetic gift. In addition, in 1866 they also published The Visions of E. G. White, Not of God, questioning the validity of her prophetic claims 75B. F. Snook, and William H. Brinkerhoff, The Visions of E. G. White, Not of God (Cedar Rapids, Ohio: Cedar Valley Times Book and Job Print, 1866). On the other hand, the denomination had to defend itself against external criticisms against its belief in Ellen White. In reality, people like William Sheldon and Miles Grant viewed the newly formed denomination as being another cult led by a false prophetic leader. Again, most of the critical arguments were repetitive from previous years, but Sabbathkeeping Adventists had to address two new nuances related to Ellen White's gift. One was the critic's claim that Sabbathkeeping Adventists "suppressed" some of her earlier writings because of doctrinal inconsistencies with the Scriptures and accused the Adventists of dishonesty. A second issue was the objections that there was nothing extraordinary or supernatural about Ellen White's gift and therefore she was to be equated to the other false prophets. <sup>76</sup>William Sheldon, "The Visions and Theories of the Prophetess Ellen G. White in Conflict With the Bible," Voice of the West, Jan. 11, <sup>1867, 52.</sup> Seventh-day Adventists not only responded to the new questions, but also reaffirmed their position on the gifts. By the early 1870s Ellen White's gift of prophecy became well established within their theological teachings. GOP 264.4

Responding to the issue of suppression, Seventh-day Adventists admitted that parts of Ellen White's earlier writings were not republished in later publications, but that was done for practical and stylistic reasons rather than avoidance of doctrinal inconsistencies, as the critics claimed. Uriah Smith, for one, explained that whenever a decision to republish a vision was taken, it was not an unusual practice to omit some part from the earlier versions. He gave two reasons for this practice. First, the "suppression" of certain information was *related to the original circumstances* and aim of the

vision. "Portions which are claimed to have been suppressed," Smith explained, "are simply some things which related to particular and local circumstances, and having accomplished their object, have not been inserted when that which is of general interest has been republished." Second, Smith observed that in cases where certain language or expressions were left out, the meaning of the vision had not changed. The visions contained "nothing but what we [Seventh-day Adventists] still fully endorse," Smith argued. 77Uriah Smith, "The Visions—Objections Answered," Review and Herald, July 31, 1866, 66. (Italics supplied.) *GOP 265.1* 

Thus for Smith and Seventh-day Adventists, the "suppression" or the "left out" parts of certain visions had nothing to do with hiding or changing of theological beliefs, but with making those visions suitable for the general readership. To prove their point further, Adventists also decided to republish some of the earliest writings of Ellen White and show that they had no intentions of hiding information from the visions. <sup>78See</sup> James White, ["A Note"], Review and Herald, Mar. 25, 1880, 208. Ellen White's 1851 booklet, A Sketch of the Christian Experience and Views of Ellen G. White was published as Early Writings of Mrs. White: Experience and Views and Spiritual Gifts, Volume One (Battle Creek, Mich.: Review and Herald®, 1882). See also: James White, Life Sketches: Ancestry, Early Life, Christian Experience, and Extensive Labors of Elder James White, and His Wife Mrs. Ellen G. White (Battle Creek, Mich.: Steam Press 1880). The second part of the book contained materials taken from Ellen White's earlier autobiography found in Spiritual Gifts, vol. 2 (1860). The question of "suppression," therefore, was not connected to theology but practicality, and Adventist leadership saw nothing wrong doing it. 79James White, "Life Sketches," Review and Herald, May 27, 1880, 352 265.2

Seventh-day Adventists also offered, for the first time, the supernatural argument for the authenticity of Ellen White's visions and responded to the critics who claimed that there was nothing extraordinary about her visionary manifestations. Up to that time the Adventists seemed reluctant to use this type of argument since many fanatical visionaries and spiritualizes appeared to exhibit similar paranormal displays and their main emphasis was placed on the "extraordinary," or the "supernatural." <sup>80Seventh-day</sup> Adventists

considered those to be satanic and false manifestations. By the mid-1860s, however, that would change. Seventh-day Adventists began to argue, because of the critics, that Ellen White's gift had supernatural manifestations. These included: (a) the unnatural physical conditions while she was in vision; (b) revelations of facts unknown to her; and (c) the inability to control or influence the timing of her visionary experiences. *GOP* 265.3

In 1868 James White described some of the supernatural conditions while Ellen White was in vision. He pointed out, first, that she was "utterly unconscious of everything transpiring around her." Second, she did not breathe during the entire vision "as has been repeatedly proved by pressing upon the chest, and by closing the mouth and nostrils." Third, "immediately on entering vision" her muscles became "rigid" and her "joints fixed, so far as any external force can influence them." Fourth, she could not see anything for a while after coming out of vision but her eyesight was not "impaired." White also noted that up to 1868 she had had between 100 and 200 visions that had been witnessed by many people, both believers and unbelievers. Therefore what she was describing was not a secret to only a few of her followers. 81James White, Life Incidents: In Connection With the Great Advent Movement, as Illustrated by the Three Angels of Revelation XIX (Battle Creek, Mich.: Steam Press, 1868), 271-274. GOP 265 4

Likewise, Loughborough, who personally witnessed many of Ellen White's visionary manifestations, reported that while in vision Ellen White did not breathe, her eyes were open, and "audible words were spoken without breath." 82J. N. Loughborough, "Remarkable Fulfillment of the Visions," Review and Herald, Dec. 25, 1866, 30 Loughborough also added that Ellen White had the ability to foresee things that were previously unknown to her and hidden from the rest of them. "So, to us, in this whole case," he concluded, "there is a striking proof as to the source from whence these visions proceed. Works of darkness were reproved and brought to light by the testimony, wrongs in the church corrected; and this is the characteristic of true gifts." 83J. N. Loughborough, "Remarkable Fulfillments of the Visions. No. 2," Review and Herald, Jan. 15, 1867, 62, 63.

Furthermore, Seventh-day Adventists also pointed out that Ellen White's visionary experiences were not controlled by anyone. After all, they were unexpected to Ellen White herself. She got visions while addressing congregations, while "prostrated by sickness," "while walking with friends," or "when in prayer alone." <sup>84 James</sup> White, Life Incidents, 272, 273. The timing of any of her visions was up to God only. As D. M. Canright put it, Ellen G. White could not "have a vision at any time she wished, nor avoid having them if she would like." <sup>85D.</sup> M. Canright, "Conversations on Important Subjects: No. 3," Review and Herald, Feb. 4, 1868, 115. The supernatural, Seventh-day Adventists argued, was not absent from Ellen White's experiences, although it was not particularly emphasized up to that time. *GOP* 266.2

It is in this context that in the late 1860s and early 1870s Seventhday Adventists began to openly affirm their belief in Ellen White and acknowledge the gift of prophecy as part of their theological package. In 1868 Seventh-day Adventists published Uriah Smith's The Visions of Mrs. E. G. White: A Manifestation of Spiritual Gifts According to the Scriptures. 86Uriah Smith, The Visions of Mrs. E. G. White: A Manifestation of Spiritual Gifts According to the Scriptures (Battle Creek, Mich.: Stream Press, 1868). The material was previously published in a series of articles, "The Visions—Objections Answered," in the Review and Herald in 1866. It was an attempt to respond comprehensively to the specific objections raised by Snook and Brinkerhoff's The Visions of E. G. White, Not of God 87As already noted, this was the first book published specifically against Ellen White's prophetic revelations. Smith's work was considered to be of prime importance and was to be widely distributed among Seventh-day Adventists and their friends. 88James White, "New and Important Work," Review and Herald, Aug. 25, 1868, 160; N. Fuller and S. B. Whitney, "Seventh Annual Session of the N. Y. and PA. State Conferences," Review and Herald, Nov. 17, 1868, 246; D. T. Shireman, "Objections to the Visions," Review and Herald, Dec. 1, 1868, 264. The book became the first Seventh-day Adventist apologetic work exclusively defending Ellen White's gift. GOP 266.3

In addition, the denomination affirmed its belief in Ellen White by issuing official General Conference resolutions. One example is the resolution from the ninth annual General Conference in 1871:

"Resolved, That we reaffirm our abiding confidence in the Testimonies of Sr. White to the church, as the teaching of the Spirit of God, and that we have each year continual and growing evidence that they are such." 89Uriah Smith and James White, "Business Proceedings of the Ninth Annual Session of the General Conference of S. D. Adventists," Review and Herald, Feb. 14, 1871, 68. Curiously, this was the first time Ellen White's name was used in such a document. Similar official resolutions continued to appear in later years. 90Some examples are: Uriah Smith and G. I. Butler, "Business Proceedings of the Twelfth Annual Meeting of the S. D. A. General Conference," Review and Herald, Nov. 25, 1873, 190; James White and A. B. Oyen, "Sixteenth Annual Session of the General Conference of S. D. Adventists," Review and Herald, Oct. 4, 1877, 105; Uriah Smith and S. N. Haskell, "The General Conference Business Proceedings," Review and Herald, Dec. 13, 1881, 376. GOP 266 4

A more significant development took place in 1872, when the doctrine of spiritual gifts, including the gift of prophecy, became part of the first Seventh-day Adventist doctrinal statement of beliefs. Point 16 of the document, A Declaration of the Fundamental Principles Taught and Practiced by the Seventh-day Adventists, stated: GOP 267.1

That the Spirit of God was promised to manifest itself in the church through certain gifts, enumerated especially in 1 Cor. 12 and Eph. 4; that these gifts are not designed to supersede, or take the place of, the Bible, which is sufficient to make us wise unto salvation, any more than the Bible can take the place of the Holy Spirit; that in specifying the various channels of its operation, that Spirit has simply made provision for its own existence and presence with the people of God to the end of time, to lead to an understanding of that word which it had inspired, to convince of sin, and work a transformation in the heart and life; and that those who deny to the Spirit its place and operation, do plainly deny that part of the Bible which assigns to it his work and position. 91A Declaration of the Fundamental Principles Taught and Practiced by the Seventh-day Adventists (Battle Creek, Mich.: Stream Press, 1872). GOP 267.2

Although the name of Ellen White was not used specifically, the allusion to her gift is evident. While the document was never

officially adopted nor had "any authority," it acknowledged the gift of prophecy as being an inextricable part of the Seventh-day Adventist doctrinal package and one of the denomination's identifying marks. GOP 267.3

The new charges of suppression and lack of supernatural evidences for Ellen White's gift, therefore, did not diminish the Seventh-day Adventist confidence in her gift. Instead they prompted the church to become more open and affirmative of its acceptance of the gift of prophecy and Ellen White. It is because of this phenomenon that Seventh-day Adventists viewed themselves as the true end-time people of God who kept the commandments of God and had the gift of prophecy manifested among them. By 1872 Ellen White's prophetic gift was affirmed as part of the Seventh-day Adventist identity. *GOP* 267.4

### Conclusions

Based on the stages of development of how Seventh-day Adventists accepted Ellen White's prophetic gift from 1844 to 1872 discussed in this chapter, three general conclusions can be noted. First, the Seventh-day Adventist acceptance of the modern manifestation of the prophetic gift was based on the Bible and its teachings. As demonstrated, during each period, there were those who questioned the validity of Ellen White's prophetic claims. Although most of the objections were repetitive, each new period brought some new nuances that the denomination had to address. Seventh-day Adventists, therefore, tried to offer solutions to each of the raised objections and to show biblical evidences for their acceptance of Ellen White's prophetic gift. Thus the sophistication and the biblical confirmation of their theology on the topic expanded and deepened at each stage. The raised objections, therefore, did not hurt but affirmed the denomination's confidence in Ellen White. While the Sabbathkeeping Adventists agreed that there were instances of false prophetic claims, they also believed that the Bible allowed for the true display of the gift of prophecy before the second coming of Jesus. Ellen White's gift, they believed, was a part of the true manifestation of the biblical gift of the Spirit. From a "sign," her gift became to be seen as an "identifying mark" of the end-time people of God, and it became eventually one of the peculiar doctrines of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination. GOP 268.1

A second conclusion that can be established from this study is that a belief in Ellen White's gift has to be based not only on evidence, but also on personal experiences with her writings. Early Seventh-day Adventists understood that people needed time and space to examine, understand, and appreciate the gift of prophecy as displayed through Ellen White. Of course, they believed that sincere people who would take time to acquaint themselves with her messages eventually would find her gift to be genuine and authentic. But it is remarkable how early Sabbathkeeping Adventists, including Ellen White, were willing to show patience and tolerance toward individuals who were honestly searching to find out the truth about her prophetic claims. Related to that belief was also their reluctance to make Ellen White's gift a "test of fellowship," although the issue evolved through different nuances as this

chapter has demonstrated. Modern Seventh-day Adventism should remember, therefore, that because of its nature, the acceptance of Ellen White's prophetic gift should not be based on intellectual (or theological) evidence only. People should be given sufficient time to familiarize themselves with Ellen White's life and ministry through her writings and make intelligent decisions about her prophetic claims. The gift of prophecy cannot be imposed, but must be experienced. GOP 268.2

A third conclusion that can be drawn is that the acceptance of Ellen White's gift has helped Seventh-day Adventists to establish important theological principles and put the doctrine of spiritual gifts (and the gift of prophecy in particular) into a balanced perspective within their overall theology. The discussion over Ellen White's gift has helped the denomination (a) to formulate and develop biblical and theological principles in defense of the modern display of the gift of prophecy; (b) to clarify the relationship between the Bible and Ellen White's prophetic role; (c) to reject the notion of Ellen White's gift as a source for Seventh-day Adventist doctrines; and (d) to begin to see the gift of prophecy as having end-time significance for the remnant people of God. What Seventh-day Adventists must never forget is that Ellen White's writings should never be equated or used in place of the Bible. After all, part of her prophetic role was to bring people back to the Scripture. Seventh-day Adventism at its best has always made a distinction between the Scriptures and the gifts of the Spirit, including Ellen White's gift of prophecy. GOP 268.3

Because of its nature, the acceptance of Ellen White's prophetic gift has continued to bring waves of theological tensions and controversies within and without the Seventh-day Adventist denomination since 1872. The church, on its part, has continued to clarify, explain, and defend its belief in her prophetic claims. The doctrine of the gift of prophecy, therefore, is still a fundamental part of the Seventh-day Adventist theological system. *GOP 269.1* 

# Chapter 14 - The Foundational Orientation of Ellen White's Prophetic Ministry

Merlin D. Burt

Even though Ellen White passed away 100 years ago, millions are still blessed by her writings, and they continue to be translated into many new languages. People continue to know Jesus better and read their Bible more after reading her writings. Why is this so? Because Ellen White's writings and ministry were and still are focused on bringing people to Jesus and the Bible. It is vital that Seventh-day Adventists and others who are interested in Ellen White orient their understanding of her life and writings in terms of this focus. *GOP* 270.1

From the age of 17 until the end of her life, more than 70 years later (1844-1915), she received what she and many others believed were supernatural prophetic dreams and visions. These helped and encouraged people in their walk with Jesus; provided a picture of the character of God and the cosmic conflict between good and evil; and guided in the establishment of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. There are many ways of evaluating Ellen White and her prophetic ministry. The purpose of this chapter is to establish that for Ellen White there were two foundational hermeneutical principles that anchored her entire Christian experience and her prophetic ministry. These were her passion for Jesus and the love of God and her understanding of the relationship of her writings to the Bible. A correct understanding and emphasis on these two foundational aspects of Ellen White's writings and ministry are essential to a correct interpretation. Every other interpretative principle connects to these, and without them it is not possible to understand her ministry and writings correctly GOP 270.2

Seventh-day Adventists consider Ellen White's writings to be a manifestation of the Spirit of Prophecy. This has sometimes been challenged, but it is essentially accurate if understood correctly as the work of the Holy Spirit and not exclusively limited to Ellen White's ministry or writings. Revelation 19:10 describes the prophetic gift or "Spirit of Prophecy" as the "testimony of Jesus." There is something profound in the words "testimony of Jesus."

1See also Rev. 1:2; 1:9; 12:17. The entire process is intrinsically Christ-centered. In Revelation John is given the testimony from Jesus for the seven churches. The words literally convey the meaning that Jesus Himself is communicating with His people through the prophetic messenger. Jesus' prophetic testimony through John in the book of Revelation became a part of the Bible. The message of Jesus comes through the prophetic revelation that is found in the Bible. Thus the entire prophetic process is also centered in Scripture. *GOP* 270.3

Ellen White also understood her prophetic visions as a testimony from Jesus and also intrinsically Christ-centered. Her writings, while not Scripture, were intentionally written in a way to directly bring the reader to the Bible and its message. *GOP 271.1* 

Recognizing Ellen White's prophetic message suggests a process that brings a person from uncertainty to confidence. Ellen White herself understood the need to evaluate and consider before accepting that God was indeed speaking. She wrote sympathetically of those who were uncertain. GOP 271.2

I have been shown that some, especially in Iowa, make the visions a rule by which to measure all, and have taken a course which my husband and myself have never pursued. Some are unacquainted with me and my labors, and they are very skeptical of anything bearing the name of visions. This is all natural, and can be overcome only by experience. If persons are not settled in regard to the visions, they should not be crowded off. . . . Those who were, comparatively, strangers to the visions have been dealt with in the same manner as those who have had much light and experience in the visions. Some have been required to endorse the visions when they could not conscientiously do so, and in this way some honest souls have been driven to take positions against the visions and against the body which they never would have taken had their cases been managed with discretion and mercy. Some of our brethren have had long experience in the truth and have for years been acquainted with me and with the influence of the visions. They have tested the truthfulness of these testimonies and asserted their belief in them. They have felt the powerful influence of the Spirit of God resting upon them to witness to the truthfulness of the visions.

If such, when reproved through vision, rise up against them, and work secretly to injure our influence, they should be faithfully dealt with, for their influence is endangering those who lack experience. 2Ellen G. White, Testimonies for the Church (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press®, 1948), 1:382, 383 (Italics supplied.); idem, "Testimony Concerning Moses Hull and Wife, Also Brother Whitney," manuscript 6, 1862. GOP 271.3

The key word in this statement is "experience." Divine illumination must attend a reasoned consideration of Ellen White's writings and ministry. It is the Spirit of God that brings assurance as we read the Bible. The same Spirit uses Ellen White's writings to connect us to Jesus and to the message of the Bible. This brings recognition of the veracity of prophetic special revelation. GOP 271.4

To gain this "experience," readers of Ellen White's writings must understand her foundational orientation—the love of God in Christ and an orientation toward the Bible. GOP 271.5

Too often Ellen White has been presented as having two other passions—rebuking sinners and giving rules. While she did find herself obligated to do the latter, this was not her personal life emphasis or even the focus of her ministry. Seventh-day Adventists and others who have a hard view of Ellen White need to reframe their understanding in terms of who she really was, what she truly thought, and what she actually said. GOP 271.6

This chapter is an overview and reflective look, rather that a detailed study. <sup>3A</sup> brief overview of Ellen White's orientation toward the love of God in Christ and toward Scripture is in Merlin D. Burt, ed., Understanding Ellen White (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press®, 2015), vi-xi. In the first section we will examine Ellen White's understanding of the love of God in Christ in terms of her childhood conversion and early visions; her writings up to 1888; and finally the last decades of her life as a widow. In the second section we will exam her writings in terms of her focus on Scripture as the only foundation for faith and practice. This will include an examination of the earliest understanding of Adventists regarding the relationship between Ellen White's writings and the Bible; her own statements in relation to Scripture; the Adventist understanding of canonical and noncanonical writings; and Ellen White's role in Seventh-day Adventist doctrinal development. *GOP* 

### Part I: Ellen White's Passion for the Love of God in Christ

### **Childhood Conversion and Early Visions**

Ellen White grew up in an intensely religious home. Her father was a class leader in the Methodist Church and even helped start a branch congregation on the south side of Portland, Maine, U.S.A., during the early 1840s. Ellen's childhood and teenage personality was introverted and melancholy. She had an intense inner life with high personal expectations. Probably her principal fault as a child was keeping things bottled up inside. This resulted in a lengthy emotional struggle without answers to critical questions. Her conversion spanned a period of about seven years and went through three phases. She experienced a deathbed conversion, wrestled with justification and forgiveness of sin, and finally the issue of sanctification and holiness in terms of the second coming of Jesus. <sup>4See</sup> Merlin D. Burt, "Ellen G. Harmon's Three-Step Conversion Between 1836 and 1843 and the Harmon Family Methodist Experience" (research paper, Andrews University, 1998). *GOP* 272.2

Her accident, which probably occurred in 1836 or 1837, set a new course for her life. A stone thrown by an older schoolmate broke her nose and made her a virtual invalid for the remainder of her childhood. Because of her injury, it was thought that she would die. In her weakness she simply gave her heart to Jesus and found peace. However as she recovered from her accident, she entered a new phase in her conversion process. *GOP 272.3* 

Her accident interrupted her educational plans and produced bitter thoughts toward God. The next pivotal experience of her conversion was realizing that Jesus could forgive her sins, which she experienced at an 1841 Methodist camp meeting in Buxton, Maine, U.S.A.GOP 272.4

At the lowest point in her experience she had a dream of seeing Jesus. GOP 272.5

There was no mistaking that beautiful countenance; that expression of benevolence and majesty could belong to no other. As His gaze rested upon me, I knew at once that He was acquainted with every

circumstance of my life and all my inner thoughts and feelings. I tried to shield myself from His gaze, feeling unable to endure His searching eyes; but He drew near with a smile, and laying His hand upon my head, said, "Fear not." The sound of His sweet voice thrilled my heart with happiness it had never before experienced. I was too joyful to utter a word, but, overcome with emotion, sank prostrate at His feet. <sup>5Ellen G.</sup> White, Life Sketches (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press®, 1915), 34, 35. *GOP 272.6* 

This view of Jesus was not a prophetic dream but rather a personal dream that gave her courage to talk with her mother about her doubts and fears. This led to the final step in Ellen's conversion process. Eunice Harmon arranged for Ellen to talk with Levi Stockman—a Methodist Adventist minister whom she trusted. Stockman, who would die of tuberculosis before the 1844 Disappointment, was a man of deep spiritual experience. Perhaps for the first time, Ellen Harmon opened her heart and told all of her troubles. When she had finally poured out all of her sorrows, doubts, and fears, she saw that Stockman was weeping as well. The critical help he gave her would affect her for the rest of her life. He changed her view of God, she wrote of this interview: "My views of the Father were changed. I now looked upon Him as a kind and tender parent, rather than a stern tyrant compelling men to a blind obedience. My heart went out toward Him in a deep and fervent love. Obedience to His will seemed a joy; it was a pleasure to be in His service." 6Ellen G. White, "Life Sketches Original Manuscript" (Silver Spring, Md.: Ellen G. White Estate), 43. In later years the paternal love of God became Ellen White's favorite theme. 7Ellen G. White, "The New Zealand Camp Meeting," Review and Herald, June 6, 1893, 354. She also taught that it was Jesus' favorite theme. 8Ellen G. White, Christ's Object Lessons (Battle Creek, Mich.: Review and Herald®, 1900), 40. See also idem, Testimonies for the Church, 6:55. Her favorite song was "Jesus, Lover of My Soul," by John Wesley. <sup>9Ellen G.</sup> White to Sister Sisley, letter 324 (Oct. 23), 1906; idem, "The Work in Oakland and San Francisco, No. 3," Review and Herald, Dec. 13, 1906, 10. To illustrate her passion on this topic, I quote the following: GOP 273.1

All the paternal love which has come down from generation to

generation through the channel of human hearts, all the springs of tenderness which have opened in the souls of men, are but as a tiny rill to the boundless ocean when compared with the infinite, exhaustless love of God. Tongue cannot utter it; pen cannot portray it. You may meditate upon it every day of your life; you may search the Scriptures diligently in order to understand it; you may summon every power and capability that God has given you, in the endeavor to comprehend the love and compassion of the heavenly Father: and yet there is an infinity beyond. You may study that love for ages; yet you can never fully comprehend the length and the breadth, the depth and the height, of the love of God in giving His Son to die for the world. Eternity itself can never fully reveal it. Yet as we study the Bible and meditate upon the life of Christ and the plan of redemption, these great themes will open to our understanding more and more. 10Ellen G. White, Testimonies for the Church, 5:740. GOP 273.2

Her entire great controversy narrative is framed by this theme. She wrote on the great controversy between 1858 and the end of her life. She published three sets of books, which culminated in the fivevolume Conflict of the Ages series that is so beloved today. Ellen White wrote this series in terms of the love of God. The first book, Patriarchs and Prophets, begins with the words: "'God is love.' (1 John 4:16). His nature, His law, is love. It ever has been; it ever will be." The last book, The Great Controversy, ends with the following words: "One pulse of harmony and gladness beats through the vast creation. . . . From the minutest atom to the greatest world, all things, animate and inanimate, in their unshadowed beauty and perfect joy, declare that God is love." 11Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets (Oakland: Pacific Press®, 1890), 33, 34; idem, The Great Controversy (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press®, 1911), 678. Her most translated and widely read book is Steps to Christ. The first chapter of this book is on the love of God. GOP 274.1

Sometimes people do not realize that Ellen White's first three major prophetic visions during 1844 and 1845 had Jesus at the center. In her first vision—the Midnight Cry—it is Jesus that the Advent people were following on the path. When they were discouraged, Jesus raised His arm, and a light "waved over the Advent band." In

her second major vision—the Bridegroom—it was Jesus that led His people from the holy to most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary. In her third major vision—the New Earth—it was Jesus who personally showed Ellen White the future glories of the new earth. GOP 274.2

## Writings Up to 1888

It has often been said that it was not until later in her life that Ellen White really came to understand righteousness by faith. It is true that her writings do show greater breadth and eloquence during her last decades. Yet she wrote at the 1888 Minneapolis, Minnesota, Seventh-day Adventist General Conference session, "I see a beauty of truth in the presentation of the righteousness of Christ in relations to the law as the doctor [E. J. Waggoner] has placed it before us." "This was not new light to me, for it had come to me from a higher authority for the last forty four years." <sup>12Ellen G. White sermon, manuscript 15 (Nov. 1), 1888.</sup> A year later when asked about the "new light" on righteousness by faith as presented by A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner, she remarked: "Why, I have been presenting it to you for the last forty-five years—the matchless charms of Christ. This is what I have been trying to present before your minds." <sup>13Ellen G. White sermon, manuscript 5 (June 19), 1889 GOP 274.3</sup>

Peter van Bemmelen has written a helpful paper on the theological significance of this phrase "the matchless charms of Christ." <sup>14Peter</sup> M. van Bemmelen, " 'The Matchless Charms of Christ': Theological Significance of This Phrase in Ellen White's Writings," in Christ, Salvation, and the Eschaton: Essays in Honor of Hans K. LaRondelle, ed. Daniel Heinz, Jiří Moskala, Peter M van Bemmelen (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Old Testament Department, Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, 2009), 231-240. He observed that during the 1850s Ellen White repeatedly used this phrase and others like it. *GOP* 274.4

If Christ be in us the hope of glory, we shall discover such matchless charms in Him that the soul will be enamored. It will cleave to Him, choose to love Him, and in admiration of Him, self will be forgotten. <sup>15Ellen G.</sup> White, Testimonies for the Church, 1:162. *GOP* 275.1

They will look to the blessed Savior who has given himself for them, and, with admiration and love for him who is smiling upon them, raise their voices and sing to his praise and glory, while they feel and realize the matchless depths of a Savior's love. <sup>16Ellen G. White,</sup> "Communications; Beauties of the New Earth," Youth's Instructor, Oct. 1, 1852, 13. *GOP* 275.2

I lay down the pen, and exclaim, O what love! What marvelous love! The most exalted language cannot describe the glory of heaven, nor the matchless depths of a Savior's love. <sup>17Ellen White, Spiritual</sup> Gifts (Battle Creek, Mich.: James White, 1858), 1:210, 211. GOP 275.3

Ellen White's publications reveal that her grasp of Christology was more clearly defined than her peers. In particular, her writing on the great controversy is profoundly Christ-centered. When one examines the first little book, she wrote on this theme, the chapter headings speak for themselves. The headings include: "The Fall of Satan"; "The Fall of Man"; "The Plan of Salvation"; "The First Advent of Christ"; "The Ministry of Christ"; and so forth. The first 80 pages largely emphasize the life and death of Jesus. Ellen White first presented the great controversy theme on Sunday, May 23, 1858, while in the midst of writing her book. The effect was profound. Uriah Smith reported: "When the course of the narration had brought us down to the days of the first advent, the humiliation, the suffering, and finally the crucifixion of the Savior, especially then did not only the silent tear but even the audible sobs of many in the congregation announced their hearts were touched by the sufferings of the Son of God for rebellious man." 18[Uriah Smith], "The Conference," Review and Herald, May 27, 1858, 13. The initial focus was on Jesus and the plan of salvation. So affected were the people that they stayed and listened until 10:00 p.m. that night and then continued with testimonies until 11:00 p.m. The meeting closed reluctantly. GOP 275.4

During the 1860s and early 1870s she gave careful attention to the connection between Christ's divine and human nature. <sup>19Ellen G.</sup> White, "The First Advent of Christ," Review and Herald, Dec. 17, 1872, 2. During these years she gave extensive insight on the human nature of Christ. She described Jesus as having "natural infirmities" or a

"fallen nature" by which she meant human weakness caused by a body that was diminished as a result of the fall of Adam. <sup>20Ellen G.</sup> White, "Parents and Children," Review and Herald, Jan. 20, 1863, 59. At the same time she clearly wrote in 1869: "He is a brother in our infirmities, but not in possessing like passions. As the sinless One, His nature recoiled from evil." <sup>21Ellen G.</sup> White, Testimonies for the Church, <sup>2:202</sup>. She remained consistent throughout her life that though Jesus had innocent infirmities He had no sinful propensities. *GOP* 275.5

On His divine nature, Ellen White wrote in 1878 of Jesus as "eternal," <sup>22</sup>Ellen G. White, "An Appeal to Ministers," Review and Herald, Aug. <sup>8, 1878, 49, 50.</sup> making her likely the first Adventist pioneer in print to do so. Even E. J. Waggoner, in 1890, was presenting Jesus as having a beginning at some point in the ages of eternity. <sup>23</sup>E. J. Waggoner, Christ and His Righteousness (Oakland: Pacific Press®, 1890), 21, <sup>22</sup>. Her writings on the deity of Jesus were explicit and unmistakable. "In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived." <sup>24</sup>Ellen G. White, The Desire of Ages (Battle Creek, Mich.: Review and Herald®, 1898), 530. *GOP* 275.6

Her personal correspondence reveals a passion for Jesus and His saving power. An example is a letter she wrote to her son Willie from a camp meeting held in Oakland, California, in 1874. GOP 276.1

I spoke to the people last Sunday afternoon upon the sufferings of Christ. . . . Christ crucified, Christ arisen, Christ a living Savior, Christ our Advocate in the heavenly courts, Christ coming again, is the power and the wisdom of God. . . . The cross of Calvary is God's power and wisdom, His way of saving sinners. The light reflected from the cross of Calvary makes the plan of salvation so simple that children may understand it, so powerful that none but those who are controlled by the power of Satan can and will resist it. <sup>25Ellen G. White to W. C. White, letter 19g (May 11), 1874</sup>

23. E. J. Waggoner, Christ and His Righteousness (Oakland: Pacific Press®, 1890), 21, 22. 24. Ellen G. White, The Desire of Ages (Battle Creek, Mich.: Review and Herald®, 1898), 530. 25.

Ellen G. White to W. C. White, letter 19g (May 11), 1874GOP 276.3

Perhaps the most compelling statement by Ellen White on her passion for Jesus is in the form of a picture rather than with words. In 1873 M. E. Kellogg designed a graphical representation of the history of the world that he had published in lithographic form titled: *The Way of Life From Paradise Lost to Paradise Restored*. Placed side by side in the center of the picture was the law of God hung upon a tree and Jesus hanging upon the cross. *GOP* 276.4

James White revised it slightly in 1876. GOP 277.1

After her husband's death, Ellen White finally had the picture re engraved in a costly major revision. The new lithograph placed the cross of Christ central to the picture and removed the equal position of the law of God. She also retitled it Christ the Way of Life. This picture was published in 1883, five years before the 1888 General Conference session. *GOP* 277.2

#### Ellen White and Jesus After 1888

Ellen White was nearly 61 years old at the time of the 1888 General Conference session. The remaining 26 years of her life were most productive in writing. During these years she published her greatest literary and spiritual masterpieces. These later books give particular emphasis to the life of Jesus and gospel themes. Books include Steps to Christ (1892), Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing (1896), The Desire of Ages (1898), and Christ's Object Lessons (1900). Other major books written during this time, such as Education (1903) and The Ministry of Healing (1905), also emphasize themes on the nature of Christ and the plan of salvation. GOP 278.1

During the 1890s, while she was in Australia, Ellen White did much writing for *Desire of Ages*. The work on this book brought out strong emotions that were expressed in her personal diary and in her correspondence. These comments reveal the depth of her feeling toward Jesus. *GOP* 278.2

Oh, how inefficient, how incapable I am of expressing the things which burn in my soul in reference to the mission of Christ! . . . I know not how to speak or trace with pen the large subject of the atoning sacrifice. I know not how to present subjects in the living power in which they stand before me. I tremble for fear lest I shall belittle the great plan of salvation by cheap words. <sup>26Ellen G. White to</sup> O. A. Olsen, letter 40 (July 15), 1892. GOP 278.3

My whole being longs after the Lord, I am not content to be satisfied with occasional flashes of light. I must have more. <sup>27Ellen G.</sup> White diary, manuscript 34 (July 15), 1892. GOP 278.4

In writing upon the life of Christ I am deeply wrought upon. I forget to breathe as I should. I cannot endure the intensity of feeling that comes over me as I think of what Christ has suffered in our world. 28Ellen G. White diary, manuscript 70 (July 29), 1897. GOP 278.5

I awoke at three o'clock a.m. I feel deeply the need of casting my helpless soul upon Jesus Christ. He is my helper. He is my all and in all. I am weak as water without the Holy Spirit of God to help me. 29Ellen G. White diary, manuscript 177 (Oct. 11), 1897. GOP 278 6

I find tears running down my cheeks when I think of what the Lord is to His children, and when I contemplate His goodness, His mercy, [and] His tender compassion. <sup>30Ellen G.</sup> White interview with C. C. Crisler, July 21, 1914. GOP 278.7

One of Ellen White's most touching and spiritually compelling letters is written to Elizabeth, her twin sister, in 1891 when she died. Lizzie, as she was called, did not live as a Christian through most of her adult life. It was never published, and was intended to be personal. It reveals Ellen's spiritual longing for her sister and her love for Jesus. GOP 278.8

I love to speak of Jesus and His matchless love and my whole soul is in this work. I have not one doubt of the love of God and His care and His mercy and ability to save to the utmost all who come unto Him. . . . Don't you believe in Jesus, Lizzie? Do you not believe He is your Saviour? That He has evidenced His love for you in giving

His own precious life that you might be saved? All that is required of you is to take Jesus as your own precious Saviour. I pray most earnestly that the Lord Jesus shall reveal Himself to you and to Reuben GOP 279.1

Dear sister, it is no wonderful thing that you have to do. You fell poor, suffering, and afflicted, and Jesus invites all of this class to come to Him. . . . Friends may feel sorrowful, but they cannot save you. Your physician cannot save you. But there is One who died that you might live through eternal ages. Just believe that Jesus will hear your confession, receive your penitence, and forgive every sin and make you children of God Will you give yourself in trusting faith to Jesus? I long to take you in my arms and lay you on the bosom of Jesus Christ. . . . With Jesus as your blessed Friend you need not fear to die, for it will be to you like closing your eyes here and opening them in heaven. Then we shall meet never more to part. 31Ellen G. White to Elizabeth Bangs, letter 61 (Feb. 21), 1891. GOP 279 2

#### Summary

Ellen White had a lifelong core passion for Jesus and the love of God. It has been necessary to limit the examples and illustrations, but perhaps one can begin to capture the strong pulse of her Christian experience. Adventists today, both young and old, need to see Ellen White as a person who was passionately in love with Jesus. Perhaps the best way to conclude is with one further illustration. It is a recollection from Ellen White's oldest granddaughter, Ella M. Robinson. Ella was in her 30s when Ellen White died in 1915. She had a young adult's perspective. When asked her favorite recollection of her grandmother, she said: GOP 279.3

I see Grandma standing in the pulpit, dressed in her loose-fitting, black sack suit, narrow cuffs of white, narrow white collar secure at the throat by a small brooch. She's been telling of the matchless love of Christ in suffering ignominy and death and even running the risk of eternal separation from His Father in heaven by taking upon Himself the sins of the world. She pauses, looks up, and with one hand resting on the desk and the other lifted heavenward she exclaims in a ringing voice, "Oh, Jesus, how I love You, how I love You, how I love You." There is a deep hush. Heaven is very near. 320ral interview between James R. Nix and Ella Mae Robinson, Oct. 12, 1979 GOP 279.4

The discussion of Ellen White's prophetic revelation is not merely an academic consideration. The very nature of her message draws a person to the loving Father who has revealed Himself in the gift of Jesus. *GOP* 279.5

### Part II: Ellen White and Scripture

The second key focus for correctly interpreting Ellen G. White and her writings is her continuous alignment with Scripture. One of the fundamental tenets of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is that the gifts of the Spirit listed by the apostle Paul in *Romans 12:4-8*, *Ephesians 4:11-13*, and *1 Corinthians 12:27-31* extend beyond the first century A.D. and may be expected until the second coming of Christ. Among these gifts is prophecy, which Adventists believe was manifested in the life and ministry of Ellen White. <sup>33Seventh-day</sup> Adventists Believe: An Exposition of the Fundamental Beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, 2nd ed. (Silver Spring, Md.: Ministerial Association, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2005), 247. GOP 280.1

This belief has led to misunderstandings by some Protestants who conclude that a modern manifestation of the gift of prophecy undermines one of the fundamental tenets of the Reformation—sola Scriptura. Since Adventists believe in the legitimacy of an end-time manifestation of the prophetic gift, some have concluded that they treat the writings of Ellen White as additional scripture. This conclusion is incorrect. *GOP* 280.2

## Adventist Historical Understanding of Ellen White's Writings

Adventists have historically followed the restorationist approach to Scripture that rejects creeds and tradition as authoritative. They seek to subject the centuries of Christian institutional, liturgical, and doctrinal development to the direct scrutiny and critique of Scripture in order to construct a biblical faith. Two of the three principal founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, James White and Joseph Bates, came from the Northern New England branch of the Christian Connexion Church. They brought to Adventism a firm sola Scriptura a priori. Though Adventists now have a statement of fundamental beliefs, they do not view it as creedal but rather representative of their views. Over the years their statement of beliefs has been revised and enlarged. The preamble to the statement of fundamental beliefs reads: *GOP* 280.3

Seventh-day Adventists accept the Bible as their only creed and hold certain fundamental beliefs to be the teachings of the Holy Scriptures. These beliefs, as set forth here, constitute the church's understanding and expression of the teaching of Scripture. Revision of these statements may be expected at a General Conference session when the church is led by the Holy Spirit to a fuller understanding of Bible truth or finds better language to express the teachings of God's Holy Word. <sup>34lbid., v.</sup> GOP 280.4

From the very beginning of their movement Seventh-day Adventists have decisively looked to the Bible alone to settle questions of doctrine and practice. The first fundamental belief currently reads: *GOP 281.1* 

The Holy Scriptures, Old and New Testaments, are the written Word of God, given by divine inspiration through holy men of God who spoke and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. In this Word, God has committed to man the knowledge necessary for salvation. The Holy Scriptures are the infallible revelation of His will. They are the standard of character, the test of experience, the authoritative revealer of doctrines, and the trustworthy record of God's acts in history (2 Peter 1:20, 21; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17; Ps. 119:105; Prov. 30:5, 6; Isa. 8:20; John 17:17; 1 Thess. 2:13; Heb. 4:12). 35lbid., 11.GOP 281.2

In A Word to the "Little Flock," the first publication of Sabbatarian Adventists, James White wrote: "The bible [sic] is a perfect and complete revelation. It is our only rule of faith and practice." <sup>36[James White]</sup>, A Word to the "Little Flock," May 30, 1847, 13. Nine years later he wrote: "I still say that the Bible is my rule of faith and practice, and in saying this, I do not reject the Holy Spirit in its diversity of operations." <sup>37[James White]</sup>, "Note," Review and Herald, Feb. 14, 1856, 158. In 1863 James White wrote: "When we claim to stand on the Bible and the Bible alone, we bind ourselves to receive, unequivocally and fully, all that the Bible teaches." <sup>38[James White]</sup>, "Do We Discard the Bible by Endorsing the Visions?" Review and Herald, Jan. 13, 1863, 52. Uriah Smith, longtime editor of the Review and Herald, wrote in 1868: GOP 281.3

The Bible is able to make us wise unto salvation, and thoroughly furnish us unto all good works. Do the visions propose to invade

this field, and erect a new standard, and give us another rule of faith and practice? Nothing of the kind. On the contrary, they are ever in harmony with the word, and ever refer to that as the test and standard. <sup>39[Uriah Smith]</sup>, The Visions of Mrs. E. G. White: A Manifestation of Spiritual Gifts According to the Scriptures (Battle Creek, Mich.: Seventh-day Adventist Publishing, 1868), 13. GOP 281 4

James White's reason for accepting the legitimacy of post-New Testament prophetic manifestations was based on his understanding of Scripture. He quoted *Joel 2:28-30* and *Acts 2:17-20* and wrote: "Dreams and visions are among the signs that precede the great and notable day of the Lord. . . . I know that this is a very unpopular position to hold on this subject even among Adventists; but I choose to believe the word of the Lord on this point, rather than the teachings of men." <sup>40lbid. See also Frank B.</sup> Holbrook, "The Biblical Basis for a Modern Prophet" (Washington, D.C.: Biblical Research Institute, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Apr. 1982). In 1868 James White remained consistent in his position on Scripture. He wrote: *GOP 281.5* 

We now see the gifts of the Spirit occupying their proper place. They are not manifested to give a rule of faith and practice. We already have a rule that is perfect in the Sacred Writings. They [the gifts] were not designed to take the place of the Scriptures. And they are not given because the Scriptures are an imperfect rule of faith and practice. But in consequence of the errors of God's professed people, in departing from the perfect rule, which he has given them, the gifts are manifested to correct the erring, and point them to the Bible as their lamp and guide. 41James White, Life Incidents in Connection With the Great Advent Movement: As Illustrated by the Three Angels of Revelation XIV (Battle Creek, Mich.: Seventh-day Adventist Publishing, 1868), 328. GOP 281 6

These statements are representative of the consistent early Seventh-day Adventist position on sola Scriptura. Early Adventists steadfastly affirmed the unique authority of the Bible as normative in matters of faith and practice. Their reason for believing in the manifestation of the prophetic gift beyond the New Testament era was founded on biblical arguments. This early position has

remained consistent to the present as demonstrated by the current Seventh-day Adventist statement of fundamental beliefs. GOP 282.

## Ellen White's Understanding of Her Writings and Scripture

#### Ellen White Believed in Sola Scriptura

Ellen White wrote extensively on the relationship of her writings to the Bible and on the role of the Bible in faith and practice. She categorically subscribed to the tenet of sola Scriptura. She wrote: "The Bible, and the Bible alone, is our rule of faith." <sup>42Ellen G. White,</sup> Counsels on Sabbath School Work (Washington D.C.: Review and Herald®, 1938), 84. The conclusion of Ellen White's first book—published in 1851—set the tone of Ellen White's position on the relationship of her writings to the Bible: *GOP 282.2* 

I recommend to you, dear reader, the Word of God as the rule of your faith and practice. By that Word we are to be judged. God has, in that Word, promised to give visions in the "last days"; not for a new rule of faith, but for the comfort of His people, and to correct those who err from Bible truth. <sup>43Ellen G. White, A Sketch of the Christian Experience and Views of Ellen G. White (Saratoga Springs, N.Y.: James White, 1851), 64. *GOP* 282.3</sup>

This statement made in her first book continued to resonate throughout her life. At the midcourse of her ministry in 1885 she wrote publicly in the church paper: "The Bible, and the Bible alone, is to be our creed, the sole bond of union; all who bow to this holy word will be in harmony." 44Ellen G. White, "A Missionary Appeal," Review and Herald, Dec. 15, 1885, 769, 770. During her earliest visions she often held the Bible, quoted from it, and placed it in the hands of those with wavering faith 450tis Nichol, "Statement by Otis Nichol" (Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Mich.); Ellen G. White, My Christian Experience, Views and Labors in Connection With the Rise and Progress of the Third Angel's Message, Spiritual Gifts, vol. 2 (Battle Creek, Mich.: James White, 1860), 75-79; James White to Leonard and Elvira Hastings, Aug. <sup>26, 1848.</sup> At one point when she doubted her visions, the answer given in vision was 50 texts of Scripture. 46Ellen G. White, Early Writings (Battle Creek, Mich.: Review and Herald®, 1882), 22, 23. At her last presentation to the 1909 General Conference session she concluded her sermon by holding up the Bible before them and

saying, "Brethren and sisters, I commend unto you this Book." 47Quoted in W. A. Spicer, The Spirit of Prophecy in the Advent Movement (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald®, 1937), 30. GOP 282.4

In writing of her experience and that of the other founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, she wrote: "We then took the position that the Bible, and the Bible only, was to be our guide; and we are never to depart from this position." <sup>48Ellen G. White, letter 105, 1903</sup> (Silver Spring, Md.: Ellen G. White Estate). GOP 283.1

She wrote explicitly of the Protestant Reformation principle of sola Scriptura. "In our time there is a wide departure from their [the Reformers'] doctrines and precepts, and there is need of a return to the great Protestant principle—the Bible, and the Bible only, as the rule of faith and duty. . . . God will have a people upon the earth to maintain the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines and the basis of all reforms." <sup>49Ellen G. White, The Great Controversy, 204, 595.</sup> In referring to Protestants who appeal to tradition or the Church Fathers, she wrote: "They may claim the authority of tradition and of the Fathers . . . but in so doing they ignore the very principle which separates them from Rome—that the Bible, and the Bible alone, is the religion of Protestants." <sup>50lbid., 448.</sup> GOP 283 2

In all, Ellen White's published writings contain the phrase "Bible and the Bible only" 45 times and "Bible and the Bible alone" 47 times GOP 283.3

#### Ellen White as a Prophet "to" Scripture

It is vital to give attention to Ellen White's own understanding of her prophetic visions and dreams in relation to the Bible. She saw herself as a messenger of the Lord to lead people to the Bible. She was a prophet to lead us to Scripture—or a prophet "to" Scripture. GOP 283.4

The Bible played a central role in Ellen White's personal experience and ministry. Not only did she use Scripture; her writings are full of Scripture and point almost continuously to Scripture. A number of her major books are commentaries on the Bible. Her five-volume Conflict of the Ages series is largely a chronological commentary on the Bible. Other books such as Christ's Object Lessons and Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing are commentaries on Jesus' parables and sermons from the Gospels. *GOP 283.5* 

Her other major books, Education, The Ministry of Healing, and Steps to Christ, while topically written, are firmly rooted in Scripture and Bible principles. Even her counsel books are strongly Bible-oriented. They are written in a way to lead a person to study the Bible and through the Bible to a faith in Jesus. Her most widely read and translated book, Steps to Christ, was first published by Fleming H. Revell, a non-Adventist Christian publishing house. <sup>51Ellen G.</sup> White, Steps to Christ (Chicago: Fleming H. Revell, 1892). It was her intention that her writings lead people to the Bible and Jesus whether they thought of her as a prophetic voice or not. *GOP* 283.6

The central purpose of her special role as a modern prophet was to testify to the centrality and primacy of the Bible. She was a prophet to point Seventh-day Adventists and the world to Scripture. <sup>52Ángel</sup> Manuel Rodríguez has postulated that Ellen White's first or inaugural vision pointed to a prophetic ministry with a broader impact than just for Seventh-day Adventists. See "Ellen G. White's Inaugural Vision: Prophetic Call, Commission, and Role," Ellen White and Current Issues Symposium, Apr. 7, 2008, 61-82. She wrote: *GOP 284.1* 

I have a work of great responsibility to do—to impart by pen and voice the instruction given me, not alone to Seventh-day Adventists, but to the world. I have published many books, large and small, and some of these have been translated into several languages. This is my work—to open the Scriptures to others as God has opened them to me.  $^{53\text{Ellen G}}$ . White, Testimonies for the Church,  $8:236_{\ensuremath{GOP}}$  284.2

Ellen White even believed that her personal and church testimonies would not have been necessary if professed believers had been diligent in their study of the Bible. On April 30, 1871, she had a dream, which led to perhaps her most direct discussion of the relationship of her writings to the Bible. <sup>54For an excellent discussion</sup> of

the relationship between Ellen White's writings and Scripture, see Tim Poirier, "Contemporary Prophecy and Scripture: The Relationship of Ellen G. White's Writings to the Bible in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, 1845-1915" (research paper, Wesley Theological Seminary, March 1986). She saw herself addressing a large group at an important church meeting. *GOP* 284.3

You are not familiar with the Scriptures. If you had made God's Word your study, with a desire to reach the Bible standard and attain to Christian perfection, you would not have needed the Testimonies. It is because you have neglected to acquaint yourselves with God's inspired Book that He has sought to reach you by simple, direct testimonies. . . . The Lord designs to warn you, to reprove, to counsel, through the testimonies given, and to impress your minds with the importance of the truth of His Word. The written testimonies are not to give new light, but to impress vividly upon the heart the truths of inspiration already revealed. 55Ellen G. White, Testimonies for the Church, 2:605, 606. GOP 284 4

When she gave vision-based testimonies to individuals, it was her practice to first point to Bible principles rather than to her own prophetic authority. "It is my first duty to present Bible principles," she wrote. "Then, unless there is a decided, conscientious reform made by those whose cases have been presented before me, I must appeal to them personally." <sup>56Ellen G.</sup> White, letter <sup>69</sup>, <sup>1896</sup>, in Ellen G. White, Selected Messages (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald®, 1958, 1980), 2:30. GOP 284.5

Ellen White used analogy to describe the relationship of her writings to Scripture. She wrote that "little heed is given to the Bible, and the Lord has given a lesser light to lead men and women to the greater light." <sup>57</sup>Ellen G. White, "An Open Letter From Mrs. E. G. White to All Who Love the Blessed Hope," Review and Herald, Jan. 20, 1903, 15. The "greater lightlesser light" comparison suggested that "just as the moon derives its light from the sun and reflects only what that source emits, so her messages are seen as deriving their authority from scripture, serving only to mirror the principles presented therein." <sup>58</sup>Poirier, 16. GOP 285.1

#### Ellen White's Writings and the Bible Canon

While Seventh-day Adventists do not see a difference in the nature or character of Ellen White's inspiration compared with the Bible writers, they are very clear on the difference between the role and function of the Bible versus her writings. Adventists would compare her writings to noncanonical prophets such as Enoch, Huldah, Deborah, Miriam, Elijah, Elisha, Nathan, Gad, Ahi- jah, Iddo, John the Baptist, and other New Testament prophets who did not write portions of the Bible. Ellen White wrote: GOP 285.2

During the ages while the Scriptures of both the Old and New Testament were being given, the Holy Spirit did not cease to communicate light to individual minds, apart from the revelations to be embodied in the Sacred Canon. The Bible itself relates how, through the Holy Spirit, men received warning, reproof, counsel, and instruction, in matters in no way relating to the giving of the Scriptures. And mention is made of prophets in different ages, of whose utterances nothing is recorded. In like manner, after the close of the canon of the Scripture, the Holy Spirit was still to continue to work, to enlighten, warn, and comfort the children of God. <sup>59Ellen G. White, The Great Controversy, viii.</sup> *GOP* 285.3

Nathan in particular is a good example of a noncanonical prophet with a similar role as Ellen White. He is called a prophet, he wrote an inspired book, yet his book is not included in the Bible. Nevertheless his prophetic role was recognized by David, who was himself a canonical prophet (see 1 Kings 1; 1 Chron. 17:1-15; 29:29; 2 Chron. 9:29; Ps. 51:1). Interestingly, the noncanonical prophet, Nathan, was sent by God to rebuke the canonical prophet, David. GOP 285.4

Ellen White explicitly wrote that her writings were not additions to Scripture. GOP 285.5

Brother J would confuse the mind by seeking to make it appear that the light God has given through the Testimonies is an addition to the Word of God, but in this he presents the matter in a false light. God has seen fit in this manner to bring the minds of His people to His Word, to give them a clearer understanding of it. <sup>60Ellen G. White,</sup>

Thus Adventists and Ellen White clearly ascribe fundamental authority to the canon of Scripture and do not see modern prophetic visions and dreams as additional Scripture. GOP 286.1

#### Ellen White's Role in Seventh-day Adventist Doctrine

It is historically evident that Ellen White's writings were not the source of any Seventh-day Adventist doctrine. Her counsels have enriched Adventist doctrinal study and provided a correcting and unifying influence, but her writings have never been the basis for fundamental Adventist doctrine or Christian experience. A brief survey of the development of some Seventh-day Adventist beliefs follows. GOP 286.2

Adventists brought with them from other Protestant denominations their doctrines of God, salvation, and sin. Though these concepts developed over time, they were comparable in many ways to the Arminian rather than the Calvinist branch of Protestantism. Certain doctrines that might be considered distinctive for Seventh-day Adventists were also either inherited or developed through Bible study. The concept of the imminent return of Jesus based in a historicist interpretation of Daniel and Revelation came through the Millerite movement and an understanding of Reformation-era historicists. The Adventist doctrine of conditional immortality, the unconsciousness of the soul in death, and the final destruction of the lost came through a minority view from within the Millerite movement and particularly through the influence of George Storrs. 61George Storrs, "An Inquiry: Are the Wicked Immortal? In Six Sermons," Bible Examiner, May 1843, 2-14; idem, "Intermediate State of the Dead, or State From Death Until the Resurrection," Bible Examiner, May 1843, 15, 16. The seventhday Sabbath concept was largely a result of the influence of Seventh Day Baptists. Ellen White accepted conditional immortality before she had her first vision, and she accepted the Sabbath through personal Bible study in connection with a tract written by Joseph Bates. In regard to the Sabbath, this occurred soon after her marriage during the late summer or early fall of 1846. She did not have a vision on the Sabbath until 1847. The heavenly sanctuary doctrine and the eschatological importance of the

Sabbath came largely through the theological influence of O.R.L. Crosier and Joseph Bates. 62O.R.L. Crosier and F. B. Hahn, Day-Dawn, published on last page of Ontario Messenger, Mar. 26, 1845; O.R.L. Crosier, "The Law of Moses," Day-Star Extra, Feb. 7, 1846, 37-44; Joseph Bates, The Seventh Day Sabbath, a Perpetual Sign, From the Beginning to the Entering Into the Gates of the Holy City, According to the Commandment (New Bedford, Mass.: Benjamin Lindsey, 1847). Ellen White's visions provided support and enrichment, but the essential concepts were biblically derived and explained. *GOP* 286.3

The doctrine of tithing waited until Adventists studied the matter biblically in the 1870s. The development of this doctrine was not initiated or directed by Ellen White's writings. <sup>63Report of the General</sup> Conference Held at Battle Creek, Michigan, June 3-6, 1859: Containing an Address on Systematic Benevolence, also Practical Discourses (Battle Creek, Mich.: Review and Herald Office, 1859); Systematic Benevolence: The Bible Plan of Supporting the Ministry (Battle Creek, Mich.: Seventh-day Adventist Publishing, 1878). Though Ellen White's writings were influential, it was Scripture that remained the determining authority for this doctrine. *GOP* 286.4

Thus Ellen White is not the source or initiator of Seventh-day Adventist doctrinal development. Her writings provided a unifying and enriching influence. Her positions did not result in a suspension of biblical study; rather, they served as a catalyst for further Bible study. GOP 286.5

### Summary

This section has provided an overview regarding Ellen White and the Bible. Adventists consider themselves Protestants and have from their beginning embraced a restorationist approach to the principle of sola Scriptura. Ellen White also explicitly subscribed to this principle. Neither early Adventists nor Ellen White herself saw her prophetic experience as incompatible with this principle. Rather, they saw her visions as a fulfillment of biblical predictions and subject to biblical authority. Ellen White went even further and expressed that her prophetic gift and writings were intended to lead people to the Bible. She saw herself as a prophet "to" Scripture. She sought to point not only Seventh-day Adventists but also the broader Christian community and people in general to the Bible and its message. She did not believe her personal testimonies would have been necessary if there had been greater faithfulness in Bible study and practice. Finally, an examination of Seventh-day Adventist doctrinal development shows that Ellen White's visions and prophetic dreams supported and enriched the process but were never originating or determinative. Seventh-day Adventists view her as a noncanonical prophet. GOP 287.1

It is vital to understand Ellen White's personal experience in relation to the Bible. She earnestly studied the Bible and had committed much of it to memory. She did not give token acknowledgment to Scripture. Both her personal and public writings are centered on the Bible and contain almost continual allusions, references, and quotations to it. The theological and lifestyle standards she promoted were invariably linked to Scripture. It is expected that Seventh-day Adventists will continue to focus their attention on the Bible and cherish the principles of sola Scriptura... GOP 287.2

#### Conclusion

There are many hermeneutical or interpretative principles that are important for understanding Ellen White's writings. As important as these various interpretative principles are, the foundational hermeneutic on which all the others are built are Ellen White's orientation toward the gospel that reveals the paternal love of God in Jesus and her orientation toward Scripture. If these two principles are correctly understood and integrated, then everything else will fall into proper place. When reading and presenting Ellen White or her writings, we must always give emphasis to the love of God in Jesus and the focus of her writings toward the Bible. If we do this, we will be faithful both to her intention and to God's intention. To neglect this foundation is dangerous and will usually lead people to misinterpret her writings and will inevitably diminish her influence and the power of God's revelation. *GOP* 287.3

If it is true that Jesus gave His own testimony through the prophetic gift as explained by John in Revelation, then it is imperative that we listen. The "testimony of Jesus" brings us redemption and His loving guidance in a world broken by sin and suffering. Could it be that Jesus has provided in the writings of Ellen White a help that can ensure that Seventh-day Adventists are truly a people of the Book? Could it be that by reading her writings we will be drawn to Jesus and our loving God and receive insights that will transform our lives? Millions have had this experience, but the proof is in the act of reading her writings and connecting with the Bible in a living dynamic process of faith and action. GOP 287.4

# Chapter 15 - Sola Scriptura and Ellen G. White: Historical Reflections

Alberto R. Timm

Seventh-day Adventists have always subscribed to the Protestant principle of sola Scriptura (by Scripture alone). 1For a more in-depth study of the various nuances of the sola Scriptura principle, see, e.g., Keith A. Mathison, The Shape of Sola Scriptura (Moscow, Idaho: Canon Press, 2001); E. Edward Zinke, "Faith-Science Issues: An Epistomological Perspective," Journal of the Adventist Theological Society 15, no. 1 (Spring 2004): 63-90; Rolf J. Pöhler, "Adventisten, Ellen White und das Sola-Scriptura-Prinzip," Spes Christiana 17 (2006):45-68; Joel R. Beeke et al., Sola Scriptura: The Protestant Position on the Bible (Orlando, Fla.: Reformation Trust, 2009); Graham Cole, "Sola Scriptura: Some Historical and Contemporary Perspectives," Churchman 104, no. 1 (1990): 20-34; Aleksandar S. Santrac, "The Sola Scriptura Principle in the Current Debate," Journal of the Adventist Theological Society 24, no. 1 (2013): 107-126; Kwabena Donkor, "Contemporary Responses to Sola Scriptura: Implications for Adventist Theology," Reflections—The BRI Newsletter 41 (January 2013): 5-8; John C. Peckham, "Sola Scriptura: Reductio ad absurdum?" Trinity Journal 35NS, no. 2 (Fall 2014): 195-223. See also G. R. Evans, Problems of Authority in the Reformation Debates (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992). As early as 1847 James White stated that the Bible is "a perfect, and complete revelation" and "our only rule of faith and practice." <sup>2[James</sup> Whitel, in James White, ed., A Word to the "Little Flock" (Brunswick, Maine: [James White], 1847), 13. Statement 3 of the 1872 A Declaration of the Fundamental Principles Taught and Practiced by the Seventh-day Adventists affirmed that "the Holy Scriptures, of the Old and New Testaments, were given by inspiration of God, contain a full revelation of his will to man, and are the only infallible rule of faith and practice "3A Declaration of the Fundamental Principles Taught and Practiced by the Seventh-day Adventists (Battle Creek, Mich.: Steam Press of the Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, 1872), 5. And in 1884 Ellen White added, "But God will have a people upon the earth to maintain the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines and the basis of all reforms." 4Ellen G. White, The Spirit of Prophecy, vol. 4: The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan From the Destruction of Jerusalem to the End of the Controversy (Oakland: Pacific Press®,

At the same time, Seventh-day Adventists also accept the writings of Ellen White as an end-time manifestation of the true gift of prophecy. But some critics argue that the acceptance of those writings undermines the Seventh-day Adventist claim of strict adherence to the sola Scriptura principle. D. M. Canright, a longtime critic of Adventism, went so far as to claim that Seventh-day Adventists have "another Bible"—Ellen White's writing—and "they have to read our old Bible in the light of this new Bible." 5D. M. Canright, Seventh-day Adventism Renounced After an Experience of Twentyeight Years by a Prominent Minister and. Writer of That Faith (Chicago: Fleming H. Revell, 1889), 136. Cf. William H. Branson, In Defense of the Faith: The Truth About Seventh-day Adventism. A Reply to Canright (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald®, 1933), 327-367. Dale Ratzlaff, another vociferous critic, stated that Seventh-day Adventists have two equal "sources of authority, two sources of truth: the Bible and the writings of Ellen G. White " 6Dale Ratzlaff, The Cultic Doctrine of Seventh-day Adventists (Sedona, Ariz.: Life Assurance Ministries, 1996), 33. (Italics original.) Some helpful studies have responded to these criticisms. 7See, e.g., T. Housel Jemison, A Prophet Among You (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press®, 1955), 371; Arthur L. White, "The Position of 'The Bible, and the Bible Only' and the Relationship of This to the Writings of Ellen G. White," at www .andrews.edu/library/car/ (accessed Dec. 2, 2014); Herbert E. Douglas, Messenger of the Lord: The Prophetic Ministry of Ellen G. White (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press®, 1998), 408-433; Merlin D. Burt, "Ellen G. White and Sola Scriptura" (paper presented at the Seventh-day Adventist Church and Presbyterian Church USA Conversation, Office of the General Assembly PC [USA], Louisville, Ky., Aug. 23, 2007), at adventistbiblicalresearch.org (accessed Dec. 2, 2014); Jud Lake, Ellen White Under Fire: Identifying the Mistakes of Her Critics (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press®, 2010), 132-178; George R. Knight, "Bible, Ellen G. White's Relationship to the," in Denis Fortin and Jerry Moon, eds., The Ellen G. White Encyclopedia, 2nd ed. (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald®, 2013 [2014]), 647-649; R. Clifford Jones, "Ellen White and Scripture," in Merlin D. Burt, ed., Understanding Ellen White: The Life and Work of the Most Influential Voice in Adventist History (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press®; Silver Spring, Md.: Ellen G. White Estate, 2015), 45-54. but there is room to further assess the relationship between the sola Scriptura principle and the writings of Ellen G. White broader historical from а

perspective. GOP 289.2

The present article surveys basic concepts related to (1) the Roman Catholic claim to being the only true interpreter of Scripture; (2) the Protestant response through the *sola Scriptura* principle; (3) new hermeneutical alternatives that undermine that principle; (4) Ellen White's reemphasis of the *sola Scriptura* principle; and (5) how she uses it in her expositions of Scripture. Such concepts can provide a useful framework for understanding Ellen White's crucial end-time role in uplifting the sola Scriptura principle. *GOP* 290.1

## The Roman Catholic Church: True Interpreter of Scripture?

Postapostolic Christianity lost much of its original biblical identity under the paganizing influence of Greco-Roman culture. 8See Robin L. Fox, Pagans and Christians (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989). One such cultural contribution was the Alexandrian allegorical method of biblical interpretation—with its explanation of Scripture based on the author's intent versus the literal reading of the scriptural text. This method allowed many Christian interpreters the latitude needed for their syncretistic accommodation of Scripture to popular culture. The acceptance of this new hermeneutical methodology began to erode several Bible doctrines from mainstream Christianity. By itself, the allegorical method would have driven the Christian church into such a pluralistic interpretation of Scripture that its religious identity would end up vanishing completely. But the Church of Rome took advantage of this religious hermeneutical subjectivism and the sociopolitical influence of the Roman Empire to establish itself as the only true interpreter of Scripture. 9Alberto R. Timm, "Historical Background of Adventist Biblical Interpretation," in George W. Reid, ed., Understanding Scripture: An Adventist Approach, Biblical Research Institute Studies, vol. 1 (Silver Spring, Md.: Biblical Research Institute, 2005), 2, 3, GOP 290.2

Gradually many extrabiblical "apostolic traditions" reshaped scriptural interpretation and the teachings of the church. Augustine even confessed, "For my part, I should not believe the gospel except as moved by the authority of the Catholic Church." 10Augustine, "Against the Epistle of Manichæus, Called Fundamental" 5.6, in NPNF Series I, 4:215. See also Eugène Portalié, A Guide to the Thought of Sain Augustine (London: Burns & Oates, 1960), 119-124, 239-241. Thomas Aquinas argued that "the formal object of faith is the First Truth, as manifested in Holy Writ and the teaching of the Church, which proceeds from the First Truth." 11Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, II-II, q. 5, a. 3, www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu (accessed Nov. 12, 2014). Later on, the Council of Trent in its fourth session (1546) would assert that all saving truths and rules of conduct are contained "in the written books and the unwritten traditions . . . preserved in the Catholic Church." To the "holy mother Church" belongs the authority

to judge the "true sense and interpretation" of the Holy Scriptures. 12Council of Trent, fourth session, in The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent, trans. H. J. Schroeder (Rockford,III.: TAN, 1978), 17-19. Consequently, ecclesiastic interests overruled true faithfulness to the Word of God and built up a strong nonbiblical hermeneutical tradition. *GOP* 291.1

Already in the Middle Ages, pre-Reformers such as John Wycliffe, John Huss, Jerome of Prague, and the Waldenses tried to restore the authority of Scripture above religious traditions and ecclesiastical decisions. Even though much limited in scope, those attempts helped to pave the way for the great Reformation of the sixteenth century. *GOP 291.2* 

## The Protestant Response: Sola Scriptura as Principle

The Reformation of the sixteenth century was first and foremost a hermeneutical reformation that gave birth to an ecclesiastical reformation 13According to Bernard Ramm, Protestant Biblical Interpretation, 3rd rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1970), 52, "there was a hermeneutical Reformation which preceded the ecclesiastical Reformation." (Italics original.) One of the leading principles of the movement was the sola principle, which implied Scriptura (1) the theoretical acknowledgment of Scripture as the only rule of faith and practice on religious matters, and (2) the practical application of that principle in the actual interpretation of Scripture. From the theoretical perspective, Luther stated clearly: "Therefore, Scripture is its own light. It is good that Scripture interprets itself." 14Martin Luther, WA 10/III:238, lines 10, 11 ("Also ist die schrifft ir selbs ain aigen liecht. Das ist dann fein, wenn sich die schrifft selbs außlegt . . ." [original spelling]); WA 7:97, line 23 ("scriptura . . . sui ipsius interpres"). At the Diet of Worms (1521) Luther affirmed that he did "not accept the authority of popes and councils, for they have contradicted each other." Unless he was "convicted by sola Scriptura and plain reason," he would never recant his views. 15Roland H. Bainton, Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther (Nashville: Abingdon, 1990), 144. GOP 291.3

John Calvin argued more explicitly that "those whom the Holy Spirit has inwardly taught truly rest upon Scripture" and that "Scripture indeed is self-authenticated; hence, it is not right to subject it to proof and reasoning." <sup>16John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion 1.7.5, trans. Ford L. Battles (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), 1:80. Likewise, article 6 of the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England (1571) reads: *GOP 291.4*</sup>

Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation. <sup>17"The</sup> Thirty Nine Articles, 1571, 1662," www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1571-39articles.asp (accessed Nov. 16, 2014). *GOP* 292.1

But from a practical perspective, the Magisterial Reformers did not

use the sola Scriptura principle as a reason to reject all other sources of religious knowledge. Luther not only accepted the first Ecumenical Creeds and much of the Church Fathers, but also wrote his Small Catechism (1529) and Large Catechism (1529). Likewise, Calvin wrote his famous Institutes of the Christian Religion (1536, revised in 1559) and his own Catechism (1538). Several other confessions and articles of faith were crafted, exposing a variety of Protestant beliefs and nuances. <sup>18Many</sup> of the Protestant confessions and articles of faith are found in Philip Schaff, ed., The Creeds of Christendom: With a History and Critical Notes, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990); John H. Leith, ed., Creeds of the Churches: A Reader in Christian Doctrine From the Bible to the Present, 3rd ed. (Louisville, Ky.: John Knox Press, 1982). An extremely helpful study of the creeds is provided by Jaroslav Pelikan, Credo: Historical and Theological Guide to Creeds and Confessions of Faith in the Christian Tradition (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2003). Furthermore, while Zwingli and Carlstadt rejected whatever the Bible did not endorse, Luther tended to allow whatever the Bible did not prohibit. 19Roland H. Bainton, Christendom: A Short History of Christianity and Its Impact on Western Civilization (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 31. Assuming that "whatever is not against the Scripture is for the Scriptures, and the Scriptures for it." 20Barnas Sears, The Life of Luther; With Special Reference to Its Earlier Periods and the Opening Scenes of the Reformation (Philadelphia: American Sunday-School Union, [1850]), 370, 371. Luther kept several components of the Catholic Mass in his own liturgical model. <sup>21See</sup> Luther's "The New Ecclesiastical System, 1523-4," in B. J. Kidd, ed., Documents Illustrative of the Continental Reformation (Oxford: Clarendon, 1911), 121-133. GOP 292.2

Different attempts were made to define the relationship between the inspired Scriptures and other noninspired Christian statements and writings. For instance, the Lutheran "Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration" (1577) suggested "a threefold tier of authority" <sup>22Robert</sup> D. Preus, Getting Into the Theology of Concord: A Study of the Book of Concord (St. Louis: Concordia, 1977), 22. comprising (1) the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, which are "the only true standard or norm by which all teachers and doctrines are to be judged"; (2) "the true Christian doctrine" collected from God's Word into the three ecumenical creeds—the Apostles' Creed, the

Nicene Creed, and the Creed of Athanasius—and the early Lutheran confession and doctrinal articles; and (3) "other good, useful, pure books, expositions of the Holy Scriptures, refutations of errors, and expositions of doctrinal articles." <sup>23Concordia: The Lutheran</sup> Confessions: A Reader's Edition of the Book of Concord, 2nd ed. (St. Louis: Concordia, 2006), 508, 509. GOP 292.3

Luther emphasized the *unconditional* authority of Scripture in contrast to the *relative* and *conditional* authority of the theologians of the church. Only a derived authority was granted to those parts of the tradition of the church "which prove to be based on Scripture" and to the three ecumenical creeds, "because he was convinced that they conform to Scripture." <sup>24</sup>Paul Althaus, The Theology of Martin Luther (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1966), 6, 7. Consequently, from a Protestant perspective, a creed is only a *norma normata* (secondary rule of faith) with "only ecclesiastical and therefore relative authority, which depends on the measure of its agreement with the Bible," which is the *norma normans* (primary rule of faith). <sup>25Schaff, The Creeds of Christendom, 1:7. GOP 292.4</sup>

Some scholars have seen the so-called Weslevan quadrilateral as a later Evangelical attempt to undermine the Protestant sola Scriptura principle, attributing to Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience the same level of authority. But Donald A. D. Thorsen points out that a tetrahedron— or flat-sided object with four triangular faces forming a pyramid—would better represent John Wesley's theology. "Scripture would serve as the foundation of the pyramid, with the sides labeled tradition. reason, and experience complementary but not primary sources of religious authority." 26Donald A. D. Thorsen, The Wesleyan Quadrilateral: Scripture, Tradition, Reason & Experience as a Model of Evangelical Theology (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 71. Under this analogy Scripture would still be allowed to confirm the validity of the other sources. GOP 293.1

Nonetheless, Alister E. McGrath argues that "the only wing of the Reformation to apply the scriptura sola principle consistently was the radical Reformation, or 'Anabaptism.' " <sup>27Alister E. McGrath</sup>, Reformation Thought: An Introduction, 4th ed. (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 101 ("scriptura sola" in the original). But even the Anabaptists who

subscribed to the seven articles of the Schleitheim Confession (1527) <sup>28</sup> The Schleitheim Confession (1527)," in Leith, ed., Creeds of the Churches, <sup>282-292</sup>. did not go very far in restoring biblical truths by way of the *sola Scriptura* principle. So the motto "the reformed church, always being reformed according to the Word of God" (*ecclesia reformata, semper reformanda, secundum verbum Dei*) <sup>29</sup>This motto was used in Edward A. Dowey, "Always to Be Reformed," in John C. Purdy, ed., Always Being Reformed: The Future of Church Education (Philadelphia: Geneva Press, 1985), 9, 10. An insightful study on the origin of this motto and other similar expressions is provided in Michael Bush, "Calvin and the Reformanda Sayings," in Herman J. Selderhuis, ed., Calvinus sacrarum literarum interpres: Papers of the International Congress on Calvin Research (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, <sup>2008</sup>), <sup>285-299</sup>. should remain the enduring motivation of those who want to carry on the restoration process birthed by the Protestant Reformation. *GOP* <sup>293.2</sup>

### Sola Scriptura: New Hermeneutical Alternatives

Several post-Reformation hermeneutical trends began overshadow the wide-ranging sola Scriptura principle and a more specific historicist interpretation of Bible prophecies. One of those trends was the Roman Catholic futurist and preterist responses to the Protestant historicist identification of the Papacy as the little horn that "grew exceedingly great" (Dan. 7:7-27; 8:9-14), the antichrist (2 Thess. 2:1-12), and the beast from the sea (Rev. 13:1-30See LeRoy E. Froom, The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers: The Historica Development of Prophetic Interpretation, 4 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald®. 1946-1954), 2:464-532. Robert Bellarmine's Disputationes (1581-1593) 31Roberti Bellarmini, Disputationes de controversiis christianæ fidei adversus hujus temporis hæreticos (Paris: Tri-Adelphorvm, 1608). and Francisco Ribera's commentary on the Book of Revelation (1591) 32Francisci Riberæ, In sacram b. Iohannis Apostoli, & Euangelistæ Apocalypsin Commentarij (Salamanca: Excudebat Petrus Lassus, 1591). proposed that those apocalyptic entities would appear on the scene only in the fardistant future. By contrast, Luis del Alcazar's exposition of the book of Revelation (1614) 33Ludovici ab Alcasar, Vestigatio arcani sensus in Apocalypsi (Antuerpia: Apud Ioannem Keerbergium, 1614). shifted the same entities back to the days of the apostles. Surprisingly, both futurism and preterism were welcomed into Protestant and Evangelical circles, becoming eventually their own highly influential schools of prophetic interpretation. So, the prophetic element of Scripture was largely restricted either to the distant future or to the faraway past, losing therefore much of its contemporary relevance. GOP 293.3

But no other post-Reformation hermeneutical alternative undermined so radically the *sola Scriptura* principle as higher criticism (also known as the historical-critical method) derived from the Enlightenment. The studies of such German rationalist theologians as Johann S. Semler, <sup>34</sup>Johann S. Semler, Abhandlung von freier Untersuchung des Canon, 4 vols. (Halle: Carl Hermann Hemmerde, 1771-1775). Julius Wellhausen, <sup>35</sup>Julius Wellhausen, Prolegomena zur Geschichte Israels, 2nd ed. (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1883); published in English as Prolegomena to the History of Israel, trans. J. Sutherland Black and Allan Menzies (Edinburgh: Adam & Charles Black, 1885). Ernst Troeltsch. <sup>36</sup>Ernst

Troeltsch, "Ueber historische und dogmatische Methode in der Theologie" (1898), in idem, Gesammelte Schriften (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1912), 2:729-753.and later on Rudolf Bultmann, 37Rudolf Bultmann, Neues Testament und Mythologie. Das Problem der Entmythologisierung der neutestamentlichen Verkündigung (Munich: Chr. Kaiser, 1941); Rudolf Bultmann et al., Kerygma and Myth: A Theological Debate, ed. Hans W.Bartsch (New York: Harper & Row, <sup>1961).</sup> questioned the historicity of Genesis 1-11, denied that Moses was the author of the Pentateuch, rejected the predictive dimension of Bible prophecy, and swept away the miracles of the Bible. The Bible was considered only an ancient-cultural mosaic and, consequently, the sola Scriptura principle was viewed as a naive way for credulous believers to study the Bible. Arthur T. Pierson pointed out that like Roman Catholicism, higher criticism "practically removes the Word of God from the common people by assuming that only scholars can interpret it; and, while Rome puts a priest between a man and the Word, criticism puts an educated expositor between the believer and his Bible." 38Arthur T. Pierson, "Antagonism to the Bible," Our Hope 15 (January 1909): 475. Placing human reason as the foundation of all else, the historical-critical method replaces sola Scriptura with sola reason. GOP 294.1

Another major hermeneutical trend that challenged the sola Scriptura principle was dispensational futurism, much indebted to John Nelson Darby (1800-1882). <sup>39The Collected Writings of J. N. Darby,</sup> 34 vols., ed. by William Kelly (London: G. Morrish, n.d.). Volume 1 was titled The Works of John Nelson Darby. Cf. Larry V. Crutchfield, The Origins of Dispensationalism: The Darby Factor (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1992); Paul Boyer, When Time Shall Be No More: Prophecy Belief in Modern American Culture (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992), 86-90. With a strong literal reading of the Bible, Darby ended up separating the church from Israel; dividing sacred history into several distinct dispensations; and proposing a pretribulation rapture of the church prior to Christ's second coming. By breaking the unity of the Bible, the sola Scriptura motif, with its corollary principles of typology and analogy of Scripture, could no longer be applied consistently to the whole Bible 40See Hans K. LaRondelle, The Israel of God in Prophecy: Principles of Prophetic Interpretation (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 1983). GOP 294.2

Thus, in the second half of the nineteenth century, Protestant-Evangelical Christianity was being challenged by the Roman Catholic futurist and preterist schools of prophetic interpretation, the liberal historical-critical method, and Darby's dispensational futurism. Each of these used a human principle in place of the Bible, thus distorting or even destroying the sola Scriptura principle. During the twentieth century several socio-scientific hermeneutics would appear on the scene, challenging even further the sola *Scriptura* dictum. 41An insightful historical overview of biblical interpretations is provided in William W. Klein, Craig L. Blomberg, and Robert L. Hubbard, Jr., Introduction to Biblical Interpretation, rev. and updated (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2004), 23-101. For a survey of the theological consequences of such interpretations, see Stanley J. Grenz and Roger E. Olson, 20th Century Theology: God & the World in a Transitional Age (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic, 1992).

### Ellen White's Emphasis on Sola Scriptura

Many nineteenth-century North American restorationists and revivalists emphasized the need to rediscover some teachings of the apostolic church 42See Richard T. Hughes and C. Leonard Allen, Illusions of Innocence: Protestant Primitivism in America, 1630-1875 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988); Timothy L. Smith, Revivalism & Social Reform: American Protestantism on the Eve of the Civil War (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980). But no other contemporary religious movement so consistently applied the sola Scriptura principle for restoring Bible truth as did Sabbathkeeping Adventists (founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church). 43See P. Gerard Damsteegt, Foundations of the Seventh-day Adventist Message and Mission (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977); Alberto R. Timm, The Sanctuary and the Three Angels' Messages: Integrating Factors in the Development of Seventh-day Adventist Doctrines, Adventist Theological Society Dissertation Series, vol. 5 (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Adventist Theological Society Publications, 1995). Crucial in this process was the prophetic ministry of Ellen G. White, which, without replacing or overshadowing the Bible (as some critics claim), actually leads people to an unconditional commitment to the Bible as its own expositor. 44Zinke, "Faith-Science Issues," 73-90, provides an insightful compilation of statements by Ellen G. White demonstrating her commitment to the Bible as "the foundational framework and authority for every aspect of our lives." This is evident in both her counsels on how Scripture should be interpreted and the way she actually interpreted it.GOP 295.2

Ellen White saw the interpretation of Scripture as a crucial matter within the great cosmic- historical controversy between good and evil. 45See, e.g., Ellen G. White, The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan: The Conflict of the Ages in the Christian Dispensation (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald®, 1911), 518-530. She explained that "there is nothing that he [Satan] desires more than to destroy confidence in God and in His word." 46lbid., 526. For example, in the Middle Ages "the circulation of the Bible was prohibited," and "unprincipled priests and prelates interpreted its teachings to sustain their pretensions." 47lbid., 51. Without mentioning by name the futurist and preterist theories, White upheld the Protestant historicist identification of the

Papacy as the "little horn" of *Daniel 7:8*, *11*, *21*, *22*, *24-26*; *8:9-14*, the antichrist of *2 Thessalonians 2:1-12*, and the beast from the sea of *Revelation 13:1-9*. <sup>48lbid., 439, 443. She also endorsed the view of the 1260 symbolic days of *Revelation 11:3* and *12:6* (cf. *Dan. 7:25*; *Rev. 11:2*; *12:14*; *13:5*) as the period of papal supremacy between A.D. 538 and 1798. <sup>49lbid., 439</sup>; see also 54, 55, 266, 267. *GOP 295.3*</sup>

On the other hand, Ellen White warned forcefully that faith in the Bible was "as effectually destroyed by the higher criticism and speculation . . . as it was by tradition and rabbinism in the days of Christ." <sup>50Ellen</sup> G. White, The Ministry of Healing (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press®, 1905), 142. She explained further: "The work of higher criticism, in dissecting, conjecturing, reconstructing, is destroying faith in the Bible as a divine revelation. It is robbing God's word of power to control, uplift, and inspire human lives." <sup>51Ellen</sup> G. White, The Acts of the Apostles in the Proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press®, 1911), 474; idem, Education (Oakland: Pacific Press®, 1903), 227. GOP 296.1

In contrast to the dispensationalist theory of splitting Bible history into several (usually seven) distinct dispensations, Ellen White spoke of two dispensations (the Old and the New Testaments), 52Ellen White referred to the two dispensations by such expressions as "the Old Testament dispensation" and "the New Testament dispensation" (The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, Ellen G. White Comments, rev. ed. [Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald®, 1980], 7:953), the "Jewish" and the "Christian" dispensations (ibid., 6:1061), and "the Mosaic and the Christian" dispensations (Ellen G. White, Manuscript Releases [Silver Spring, Md.: Ellen G. White Estate, 1990], 4:402). connected to each other by a typological interrelationship. She declared: GOP 296.2

There is no such contrast as is often claimed to exist between the Old and the New Testament, the law of God and the gospel of Christ, the requirements of the Jewish and those of the Christian dispensation. Every soul saved in the former dispensation was saved by Christ as verily as we are saved by Him today. Patriarchs and prophets were Christians. The gospel promise was given to the first pair in Eden, when they had by transgression separated themselves from God. The gospel was preached to Abraham. The

Hebrews all drank of that spiritual Rock, which was Christ. <sup>53The</sup> Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, Ellen G. White Comments, 6:1061. GOP 296.3

Recognizing the existence of "different degrees of development" of God's revelation to meet the needs of people in the different ages, White contends that in both dispensations "God's claims are the same" and "the principles of His government are the same." 54Ellen G. White, The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan, as Illustrated in the Lives of Patriarchs and Prophets (Oakland: Pacific Press®, 1890), 373. This book was later retitled as The Story of Patriarchs and Prophets as Illustrated in the Lives of Holy Men of Old, and is usually known just as Patriarchs and Prophets. "The Old Testament is the gospel in figures and symbols. The New Testament is the substance. One is as essential as the other." 55Ellen G. White, Selected Messages (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald®, 1958), 2:104. White explained that the fourth commandment, about keeping the seventh-day Sabbath (Ex. 20:8-11; cf. 31:12-18; Deut. 5:12-15; Luke 23:54-56; Heb. 4:4, 9-11; Rev. 14:7, 12), is "the great truth which unites the two dispensations, the Mosaic and the Christian, and the light upon the sanctuary shows their relation to each other." 56Ellen G. White, Manuscript Releases, 4:402. See also idem, The Acts of the Apostles, 14; idem, Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students Regarding Christian Education (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press®, 1943), 462, 463.<sub>GOP</sub> 296.4

Besides disclaiming the hermeneutical alternatives mentioned above, Ellen White also provided other insightful hints for a sola Scriptura interpretation of the Bible. Speaking of the Bible as "its own expositor," she highlighted a few additional basic concepts. One is that the Bible should be studied within the framework of the great cosmic-historical controversy between God and Satan. She declared: *GOP* 297.1

The Bible is its own expositor. Scripture is to be compared with scripture. The student should learn to view the word as a whole and to see the relation of its parts. He should gain a knowledge of its grand central theme—of God's original purpose for the world, of the rise of the great controversy, and of the work of redemption. He should understand the nature of the two principles that are

contending for the supremacy, and should learn to trace their working through the records of history and prophecy, to the great consummation. *GOP* 297.2

He should see how this controversy enters into every phase of human experience; how in every act of life he himself reveals the one or the other of the two antagonistic motives; and how, whether he will or not, he is even now deciding upon which side of the controversy he will be found. <sup>57</sup>Ellen G. White, Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students, 462, 463. *GOP* 297.3

Another basic concept is the proper balance between the exegetical study of a given passage and its interpretation in the light of the analogy of Scripture. From a more exegetical perspective, Ellen White wrote: *GOP* 297.4

But there is but little benefit derived from a hasty reading of the Scriptures. One may read the whole Bible through and yet fail to see its beauty or comprehend its deep and hidden meaning. One passage studied until its significance is clear to the mind and its relation to the plan of salvation is evident, is of more value than the perusal of many chapters with no definite purpose in view and no positive instruction gained. <sup>58</sup>Ellen G. White, Steps to Christ (Battle Creek, Mich.: Review and Herald®, 1896), 90. *GOP* 297.5

With emphasis on the analogy of Scripture, she added: GOP 297.6

The Bible is its own expositor. One passage will prove to be a key that will unlock other passages, and in this way light will be shed upon the hidden meaning of the word. By comparing different texts treating on the same subject, viewing their bearing on every side, the true meaning of the Scriptures will be made evident. GOP 297.7

The jewels of truth lie scattered over the field of revelation; but they

have been buried beneath human traditions, beneath the sayings and commandments of men, and the wisdom from heaven has been practically ignored; for Satan has succeeded in making the world believe that the words and achievements of men are of great consequence. <sup>59Ellen</sup> G. White, "The Science of Salvation the First of Sciences," Advent Review and Sabbath Herald, Dec. 1, 1891, 737. GOP 298.2

Reiterating elsewhere her emphasis on the analogy of Scripture, Ellen White confirmed its positive outcome: "The Bible is its own interpreter, one passage explaining another. By comparing scriptures referring to the same subjects, you will see harmony and beauty of which you have never dreamed." 60Ellen G. White, "God's Word Our Study-Book," Youth's Instructor, June 30, 1898, 505. With these concepts in mind, we will now consider how she actually used the sola Scriptura principle to interpret the Bible. GOP 298.3

## Ellen White's Use of the Sola Scriptura Principle

The fact that Ellen White did not do a modern exegetical analysis of the biblical text should never be used to disclaim her expositions of Scripture. Her use of Scripture is indeed a prophetic one, unfolding in many cases the inner motivations of the individuals involved and the spiritual struggles that were taking place behind the scenes. Furthermore, Ellen White's own expositions of Scripture were in harmony with the *sola Scriptura* principle, allowing the Bible to be its own interpreter. *GOP* 298.4

While many critics of the Bible questioned the historicity of Genesis 1-11 and denied its miracles, Ellen White remained in line with the Bible prophets who confirmed the historicity and reliability of those accounts. For example, as the historicity of the Creation accounts (Gen. 1; 2) was confirmed by other texts of both the Old Testament (Pss. 33:6-9, 94:9, 95:4, 5, 121:2, 136:5-9, 146:5, 6, 148:1-5, Isa. 40:26) and the New Testament (Acts 17:24-26; Col. 1:15,16; Heb. 4:4, 10; Rev. 14:7), Ellen White also confirmed it. 61Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, 44-51. The story of the fall of Adam and Eve instigated by the serpent (Gen. 3) was referred to as literal elsewhere in the Bible (Rom. 5:12, 14, 18, 19, 2 Cor. 11:3; Rev. 12:9), and she understood it likewise. 621bid., 52-62. As the story of Noah and the universal flood (Gen. 6-8) was taken literally in both the Old Testament (Ps. 104:6-9) and the New Testament (Matt. 24:37-39; Heb. 11:7; 1 Peter 3:20; 2 Peter 2:5; 3:6), so did she as well 63lbid., 90-104. GOP 298 5

As the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (*Gen.* 19:23-29) was understood historically in the Old Testament (*Deut.* 29:23; *Isa.* 13:19; *Jer.* 49:18; 50:40; *Amos* 4:11) and the New Testament (*Luke* 17:28, 29; 2 *Peter* 2:6-8; Jude 7), so she also interpreted it. <sup>64lbid.,</sup> <sup>156-170.</sup> The historicity of the miracles related to the Exodus and the pilgrimage in the wilderness were confirmed by other passages not only of the Old Testament (*Pss.* 66:6; 78:10-55; 105:26-45; 106:7-33; 136:10-16; *Mal.* 4:4) but also of the New Testament (*Acts* 7:17-44; *Heb.* 11:22-30), as well as by Ellen White. <sup>65lbid.,</sup> 241-498. The story of Jonah in the belly of the great fish (*Jonah* 1:17; 2:10) really happened as recorded in the Bible, according to Jesus (*Matt.* 12:39-

41) and Ellen White. <sup>66</sup>Ellen G. White, The Story of Prophets and Kings as Illustrated in the Captivity and Restoration of Israel (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press®, 1917), 265-278. GOP 299 1

In contrast to the critical attempts to discover the "historical Jesus" (Albert Schweitzer) <sup>67</sup>Albert Schweitzer, Von Reimarus zu Wrede. Eine Geschichte der Leben-Jesu-Forschung (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1906); published in English as The Quest of the Historical Jesus: A Critical Study of Its Progress From Reimarus to Wrede (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1911). and to "demythologize" the four Gospels (Rudolf Bultmann), <sup>68</sup>See note <sup>37</sup>, above. Ellen White recognized the Gospel narratives and miracles as historical. Her classic book *The Desire of Ages* (1898) <sup>69</sup>Ellen G. White, The Desire of Ages (Oakland: Pacific Press®, 1898) builds up trust in the way Jesus and His ministry are portrayed in the canonical Gospels, and provides many helpful insights into those narratives. This book is a good example of her commitment to the *sola Scriptura* principle in studying the Bible and expounding its message. *GOP* 299.2

#### Conclusion

One should realize that Ellen White's commitment to sola Scriptura is not acceptable to those who read the Bible from any other perspective. hermeneutical who denv any postcanonical manifestation of the gift of prophecy, 70The Commentary of Dr. Zacharias Ursinus on the Heidelberg Catechism, trans. G. W. Williard (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956), 279, placed the gift of prophecy among the spiritual gifts "given to particular individuals, and at particular times," in contrast to other gifts "necessary at all times." or who even disagree with her expositions of Bible doctrines. But in a time when Christianity is divided into many conflicting schools of biblical interpretation and into 45,000 different Christian "denominations" (by mid-2014). 71"Status of Global Mission, Context ΑD 1800-2025." 2014. of www.gordonconwell.edu/resources /documents/statusofglobalmission.pdf (accessed Dec. 1, 2014). the Bible needs to be allowed to be its own interpreter. As the foregoing history has demonstrated, this principle is easier to affirm than to practice. In a complex context like this, Ellen White's writings function as "a divine prophetic filter." able to remove false interpretations artificially imposed on the Bible, 72Alberto R. Timm, "Ellen G. White: Prophetic Voice for the Last Days," Ministry, February 2004, 20. allowing it to interpret itself and touch our lives with its transforming message. GOP 299.3

According to T. Housel Jemison, Ellen White's writings are intended "to serve three basic purposes: (1) to direct attention to the Bible, (2) to aid in understanding the Bible, and (3) to help in applying Bible principles in our lives." <sup>73Jemison, A Prophet Among You, 371.</sup> As stated in the 1986 "Methods of Bible Study" document (also known as the Rio de Janeiro document), "her expositions on any given Bible passage offer an inspired guide to the meaning of texts without exhausting their meaning or preempting the task of exegesis." <sup>74</sup> "Methods of Bible Study," in George W. Reid, ed., Understanding Scripture: An Adventist Approach, Biblical Research Institute Studies, vol. 1 (Silver Spring, Md.: Biblical Research Institute, 2005), <sup>333</sup> Correctly used, Ellen White's writings will never replace the Bible but rather will bring us into a closer understanding of and commitment to God and His Word. While the Bible has a *validating* authority over all other

sources of truth, her conformity with Scriptur	writings bear e.GOP 300.1	a validated	authority	from	its

# Chapter 16 - Ellen G. White's Use of Scripture

Frank M. Hasel

It has been aptly stated that Ellen G. White "is the most prolific, most published and most influential author" in the Seventh-day Adventist Church 1Arthur Patrick, "Learning From Ellen White's Perception and Use of Scripture: Toward an Adventist Hermeneutic for the Twenty-First Century," in Ross Cole and Paul Petersen, eds., Hermeneutics, Intertextuality, and the Contemporary Meaning of Scripture (Adelaide, Australia: Avondale Academic Press, 2014), 117. Her voluminous work is immersed in biblical thought, and what she wrote is highly indebted to Scripture. 2According to Raymond F. Cottrell, "the writings of Ellen White are as thoroughly permeated with Scripture as the air is with oxygen" (Raymond F. Cottrell, "Ellen G. White's Evaluation and Use of the Bible," in Gordon M. Hyde, ed., A Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics, Biblical Research Committee (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald®, 1974), 145. Even a casual reader of Ellen G. White's writings notices how frequently and profusely she refers to the Bible. She not only uses the Bible copiously; her thoughts abound with biblical imagery, and her writings often echo biblical language and ideas. 3Even progressive Adventists acknowledge that "whatever the subject, she thought-and wrote-in the language and thought forms of Scripture" (ibid.) and in a similar manner Fritz Guy, who states that Ellen White "was and continues to be the agent and servant of scripture; her function all along has been to call attention to it. This she did in her early day of Adventist Christianity and throughout her ministry" (Fritz Guy, Thinking Theologically: Adventist Christianity and the Interpretation of Faith [Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 1999], 124). This is reflected in a variety of different ways as she uses the Bible. <sup>4Ellen G.</sup> White never had an official training in the biblical languages (Greek, Hebrew, Aramaic) or in theology. Yet at the time of her death her personal and office libraries comprised some 1,400 volumes (cf. Arthur Patrick, "Author," in Terrie Dopp Aamondt, Gary Land, and Ronald L. Numbers, eds., Ellen Harmon White: American Prophet [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014], 96). She was conversant with a variety of theological literature and even had a Greek grammar in her private library (see Ron Graybill, "Ellen White as a Reader and Writer," Insight, May 19, 1981, 10). For Ellen G. White the King James Version (KJV) seems to have been the Bible translation she used most often. However, she felt free to use other available English Bible translations. She preferred the American Revised Version and did use it in

volume 8 of the Testimonies and other places. This practice does not confirm the estimate of some that "she depended on the King James Version" in her use of Scripture (so recently Fritz Guy, "Theology," in Aamodt, Land, and Numbers, 156). Rather, "unlike some of her most ardent supporters at the present time, she welcomed translation initiatives that improved upon the delivery of God's Word through the King James Version" (Patrick, 122; see also Frank M. Hasel, "Ellen G. White and Creationism: How to Deal With Her Statements on Creation and Evolution: Implications and Prospects," Journal of the Adventist Theological Society 17, no. 1 [2006]: 229-244, esp. 232, 233, note 9, where the differences between the KJV and Ellen G. White are discussed with regard to the age of the earth). From what we know she did not continue to use the American Revised Version, not because of any inferiority to the KJV but out of respect and "deference to those readers who might be perplexed by its use" (see W. C. White to L. E. Froom, Jan. 26, 1931, available at the White Estate Digital Resource Center [hereinafter WEDRC], http://drc.whiteestate.org/read.php?id=132692 [accessed May 25, 2015]; cf. also the other documents available on this issue in the WEDRC). In this paper we will examine her treatment and use of Scripture as evidenced in numerous instances in her published work. GOP 301.1

# Ellen G. White Uses Scripture as the Authoritative Word of God

Ellen G. White's use of Scripture is significantly influenced by her high view of Scripture. <sup>5Ellen</sup> G. White's use of Scripture is profoundly influenced by her understanding of the process of divine revelation and inspiration. For a description of Ellen G. White's understanding of the process of revelation and inspiration, see Frank M. Hasel, "Revelation and Inspiration," in Denis Fortin and Jerry Moon, eds., The Ellen G. White Encyclopedia (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald®, 2013), 1087-1101; idem, "Inspiration, Degrees of," in ibid., 895-897. See also J. H. Burry, "An Investigation to Determine Ellen White's Concepts of Revelation, Inspiration, 'The Spirit of Prophecy' and Her Claims About the Origin, Production, and Authority of Her Writings" (M.A. thesis, Andrews University, 1991); and P. G. Damsteegt, "The Inspiration of Scripture in the Writings of Ellen G. White," Journal of the Adventist Theological Society 5, no. 1 (1991): 155-179. While clearly affirming that biblical authors freely wrote biblical books using their individual style of writing, she took for granted the ultimately divine origin of the Bible and believed that God guided the biblical writers in receiving and communicating the divine message. Thus she consistently accepted the Bible as the Word of God and had "implicit faith in the Bible as a whole as it is." 6Ellen G. White, in The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, rev. ed. (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald®, 1980), 7:917. The wider context of this quote reads: "Do not let any living man come to you and begin to dissect God's Word, telling what is revelation, what is inspiration and what is not, without a rebuke. . . . We want no one to say, 'This I will reject, and this will I receive,' but we want to have implicit faith in the Bible as a whole as it is." In this sense she used the Bible as "an unerring counselor, and infallible guide," 7Ellen G. White, Fundamentals of Christian Education (Nashville: Southern, 1923), 100. and as an "unerring standard." 8Ellen G. White, The Ministry of Healing (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press®, 1942), 462. For her the Bible was the result of a supernatural process of divine revelation and inspiration where the human and the divine harmoniously and inseparably worked together. "The Bible, with its God-given truths expressed in the language of men, presents a union of the divine and the human. Such a union existed in the nature of Christ, who was the Son of God and the Son of man. Thus it is true of the Bible, as it was of Christ, that 'the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us' John 1:14." 9Ellen G. White, The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press®.

<sup>1911), vi.</sup> As such the Bible is characterized by a "simple beauty of language" and an "unerring truthfulness." 10Ellen G. White, "Importance of Bible Study," Youth's Instructor, May 7, 1884, 75; cf. idem, Lift Him Up (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald®, 1988), 127. Consequently, Ellen White treated Scripture with respect and deference throughout her lifetime, and valued the authority of the Bible above any other authority, including her own prophetic ministry. She did not deify Scripture; to her God alone is infallible. <sup>11Ellen G. White, letter 10, 1895;</sup> in idem, Selected Messages (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald®, 1958, <sup>1980), 1:37.</sup> But she also firmly believed that "His word is true" <sup>12lbid.</sup> and that the Bible is "reliable." 13. Thus for Ellen White the Bible is the ultimate norm and the standard for all Seventh-day Adventist doctrines, faith, and practice. "The Holy Scriptures are to be accepted as an authoritative, infallible revelation of God's will. They are the standard of character, the revealer of doctrines, and the test of experience." 14. Ellen G. White uses the Bible as the highest authority for faith and practice in the church. 15. This leads to a second related aspect of her use of the Bible: the sola Scriptura principle. GOP 302.1

# Ellen G. White Uses the Sola Scriptura Principle 6. in Biblical Interpretation

Ellen G. White upheld the great Protestant principle that Scripture is best interpreted by Scripture itself: "If there is a point of truth that you do not understand, upon which you do not agree, investigate, compare scripture with scripture, sink the shaft of truth down deep into the mine of God's word. You must lay yourselves and your opinions on the altar of God, put away your preconceived ideas, and let the Spirit of heaven guide into all truth." 17. To apply the Scripture principle means, for Ellen G. White, that scripture has to be compared with scripture, where different texts or passages speaking on the same topic should be brought together to provide a complete picture of what the Bible teaches. This is accomplished not "by occasional or disconnected study" and cannot "be discerned by the careless or hasty reader. Many of its treasures lie far beneath the surface, and can be obtained only by diligent research and continuous effort " 18Ellen G. White, "Our Great Treasure-House," Signs of the Times, Sept. 19, 1906, 7. Cf. idem, Counsels to Writers and Editors (Nashville: Southern, 1946), 40; idem, Testimonies to Ministers, 108. COP 303.1

In 1906 Ellen G. White wrote a series of 20 short articles for *The Signs of the Times* entitled "Our Great Treasure-House," in which, in some articles, she refers to the way that the Bible should be studied. <sup>19</sup>The first article appeared in the March 21 issue, the last on October 17, 1906. Here we are closely following Gerhard Pfandl, "Ellen G. White and Hermeneutics," in Reid, ed., Understanding Scripture, 309, 310. Several thoughts reoccur repeatedly in these articles: (1) the Bible is its own interpreter and Scripture should be carefully compared with Scripture (*Signs of the Times*, Mar. 21; Sept. 5; Sept. 19; Oct. 3, 1906); (2) we should study one text or passage until its meaning is clear, rather than read many chapters with no definite purpose in view (*Signs of the Times*, Mar. 26; Oct. 3, 1906); (3) the Bible must be studied prayerfully and with reverence (*Signs of the Times*, Mar. 21; June 6; Sept. 19; Oct. 3, 1906). *GOP 303.2* 

For her the sola Scriptura principle also encompassed the idea that all other sources of theology, such as tradition, science, reason, or

experience, are subordinated to Scripture. In the classic words of Ellen G. White, this will be the case until the end of earth's history: *GOP 304.1* 

But God will have a people upon the earth to maintain the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines, and the basis of all reforms. The opinions of learned men, the deductions of science, the creeds or decisions of ecclesiastical councils, as numerous and discordant as are the churches which they represent, the voice of the majority—not one nor all of these should be regarded as evidence for or against any point of religious faith. Before accepting any doctrine or precept, we should demand a plain "Thus saith the Lord" in its support. <sup>20E. G. White, The Great Controversy, 595. GOP 304.2</sup>

Neither does Ellen G. White elevate herself to a position where she with her prophetic giftedness is perceived as the authoritative source for the interpretation of Scripture. Rather, she time and again affirms the great Protestant principle: "The Bible is its own expositor. One passage will prove to be a key that will unlock other passages, and this way light will be shed upon the hidden meaning of the word. By comparing different texts treating on the same subject, viewing their bearing on every side, the true meaning of the Scriptures will be made evident." <sup>21E</sup>. G. White, Fundamentals of Christian Education, <sup>187</sup>. She repeatedly affirms: "The Bible is its own expositor. Scripture is to be compared with scripture. The student should learn to view the word as a whole, and to see the relation of its parts." <sup>22Ellen G.</sup> White, Education (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press®, <sup>1952</sup>), <sup>190</sup>. *GOP 304.3* 

It also means that close attention should be given to the meaning of words and symbols in order to understand their "deep spiritual meanings." <sup>23Ellen</sup> G. White, "Consecration of Teachers," Sabbath School Worker, January <sup>1891</sup>, <sup>3</sup>. For Ellen White "the language of the Bible should be explained according to its obvious meaning, unless a symbol or figure is employed." <sup>24E</sup>. G. White, The Great Controversy, 599. Speaking of some Christians who interpret figures and symbols according to their own liking, she bemoans, they do so "with little regard to the testimony of Scripture as its own interpreter, and then they present their vagaries as the

teaching of God's word" (idem, The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan From the Destruction of Jerusalem to the End of the Controversy, The Spirit of Prophecy, vol. 4 [Oakland: Pacific Press®, 1884], 344). This historical and definite meaning of the text of Scripture lead her to embrace and to endorse the fundamental hermeneutical principles that William Miller had previously advocated. Rather than endorsing an allegorical interpretation of Scripture, Ellen G. White follows a literal interpretation of the Bible. For her, real facts, real people, and real events are reported in the Bible and should be interpreted accordingly, unless the biblical context affirms a symbolic interpretation or indicates that it is a parable .GOP 304.4

She states: GOP 305.1

Those who are engaged in proclaiming the third angel's message are searching the Scriptures upon the same plan that Father Miller adopted. In the little book entitled "Views of the Prophecies and Prophetic Chronology," Father Miller gives the following simple but intelligent and important rules for Bible study and interpretation:

—GOP 305.2

"1. Every word must have its proper bearing on the subject presented in the Bible; 2. All Scripture is necessary, and may be understood by diligent application and study; 3. Nothing revealed in Scripture can or will be hid from those who ask in faith, not wavering; 4. To understand doctrine, bring all the scriptures together on the subject you wish to know, then let every word have its proper influence; and if you can form your theory without a contradiction, you cannot be in error; 5. Scripture must be its own expositor, since it is a rule of itself. If I depend on a teacher to expound to me, and he should guess at its meaning, or desire to have it so on account of his sectarian creed, or to be thought wise, then his guessing, desire, creed, or wisdom is my rule, and not the Bible." GOP 305.3

The above is a portion of these rules; and in our study of the Bible we shall all do well to heed the principles set forth. <sup>25Ellen G. White,</sup> "Notes of Travel," Review and Herald, Nov. 25, 1884, 738. Miller's complete rules of interpretation can be found in William Miller, "Rules of Interpretation," The Midnight Cry, in George R. Knight, ed., 1844 and the Rise of Sabbatarian Adventism: Reproductions of Original Documents (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and

Herald®, 1994), 69. Miller also states as rule number 14: "The most important rule of all is, that you must have faith. It must be a faith that requires a sacrifice, and, if tried, would give up the dearest object on earth, the world and all its desires, character, living, occupation, friends, home, comforts, and worldly honors. If any of these should hinder our believing any part of God's word, it would show our faith to be vain. Nor can we ever believe so long as one of these motives lies lurking in our hearts. We must believe that God will never forfeit his word. And we can have confidence that he that takes notice of the sparrow, and numbers the hairs of our head, will quard the translation of his word, and throw a barrier around it, and prevent those who sincerely trust in God, and put implicit confidence in his word, from erring far from the truth, though they may not understand Hebrew or Greek" (ibid.). This important rule of Miller's interpretation should guard the careful student not to associate William Miller too guickly with a rationalistic hermeneutic (see recently Jeff Crocombe, "A Feast of Reason-The Legacy of William Miller on Seventh-day Adventist Hermeneutics," in Cole and Petersen, 227-237, esp. 236, 237). Miller's rules of interpretation are embedded in a framework of sincere love for the Bible and are conducted in a context of faith rather than from a perspective of enlightened skeptical reason. Miller's attitude toward Scripture also reflects Ellen G. White's approach and use of Scripture. GOP 305.4

Ellen G. White not only affirms the sola Scriptura principle—she uses the Bible accordingly. She consistently explains the meaning of Scripture through Scripture. We find her constantly appealing to study the Scriptures for ourselves <sup>26</sup>Cf. E. G. White, Selected Messages, 1:18. In 1901 she wrote: "The Lord desires you to study your Bibles. He has not given any additional light to take the place of His Word. This light [the gift of prophecyl is to bring confused minds to His Word" (letter 130, 1901, as guoted in Selected Messages, 3:29; cf. also idem, Testimonies for the Church (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press®, 1948), 2:604-609. to learn from Scripture the true meaning of the Word of God. When there were theological controversies, Ellen G. White urged the Adventist pioneers not to use her writings to settle doctrinal conflict. Even in the earliest part of her ministry, particularly during the Bible Conferences of 1848 to 1850, she described her mind as being closed, but during vision she took a stance confirming certain positions after they were taken, or sometimes pointing the parties to further scriptural texts that should be examined. 27See Herbert E. Douglass, Messenger of the Lord: The Prophetic Ministry of Ellen G. White (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press® 1998), 171, 172, 175, 417; and also the statements in Ministry, October 1980, 53<sup>60.</sup> Thus, for all practical purposes Ellen G. White confirmed in her personal dealing with Scripture that Scripture alone is the proper interpreter of Scripture. She did not assume the role of being the authoritative interpreter of Scripture, but encouraged others to be diligent students of Scripture themselves. <sup>28</sup>"However much one may advance in spiritual life, he will never come to a point where he will not need diligently to search the Scriptures; for herein are found the evidences of our faith. All points of doctrine, even though they have been accepted as truth, should be brought to the law and to the testimony; if they cannot stand this test, 'there is no light in them' " (E. G. White, Testimonies for the Church, 5:575). GOP 305.5

According to Ellen G. White, God calls for "a diligent study of the Scriptures, and a most critical examination of the positions we hold. God would have all the bearings and positions of truth thoroughly and perseveringly searched, with prayer and fasting." <sup>29E. G. White, Counsels to Writers and Editors, 40.</sup> Thus, "if there is a point of truth that you do not understand, upon which you do not agree, investigate, compare scripture with scripture." <sup>30E. G. White, Testimonies to Ministers, 476.</sup> Statements like these show that for Ellen G. White "the Word of God is sufficient to enlighten the most beclouded mind, and may be understood by those who have any desire to understand it." <sup>31E. G. White, Testimonies for the Church, 5:663.</sup> She urged that "in our time . . . there is need of a return to the great Protestant principle—the Bible, and the Bible only, as the rule of faith and duty." <sup>32E. G. White, The Great Controversy, 204, 205. GOP 306.1</sup>

The significance of the priority and supreme authority of Scripture in Ellen G. White becomes evident in yet another correlated aspect of her use of the Bible: she uses and employs all of Scripture (tota Scriptura). GOP 306.2

#### Ellen G. White Uses All of Scripture

In her established praxis of comparing Scripture with Scripture Ellen G. White uses all of Scripture. Rather than giving priority to only some parts of Scripture, thereby neglecting other parts, Ellen G. White affirms that all of Scripture is to be taken into consideration for a proper understanding. She does not elevate the New

Testament over the Old Testament, but affirms the trustworthiness of all Scripture. For her, all of Scripture is inspired by God, hence everything that the Bible states should be taken into consideration when studying a given topic. "Make the Bible its own expositor, bringing together all that is said concerning a given subject at different times and under varied circumstances." 33Ellen G. White, Child Guidance (Nashville: Southern, 1954), 511. (Italics supplied.) Thus, it has aptly been stated that "at the outset it is important to observe that [Ellen G.] White made a concerted attempt to understand, employ and apply the whole of Scripture." 34Patrick, "Learning From Ellen White's Perception and Use of Scripture," 121. GOP 306.3

Her affirmation of all of Scripture is also illustrated by another rather obvious fact in her writings. A glance at the Ellen G. White Scripture index on the Ellen G. White CD-ROM (cf. also the Ellen G. White Scripture index in *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*) reveals that she refers to or quotes not just a few favorite books but every single book of the Bible. More than that, Ellen G. White refers to virtually every chapter of each biblical book. Thus she practiced what she affirmed. *GOP 307.1* 

The prime role of Scripture in Ellen G. White's thoughts becomes obvious in yet another important area of her use of the Bible: the priority of Scripture over God's general revelation in nature. *GOP* 307.2

# Ellen G. White Acknowledges the Priority of Scripture Over the General Revelation in Nature

Unlike nature, God's second instruction book that provides a general revelation of God, for Ellen G. White Scripture is the inspired Word of God and has priority over nature. <sup>35See F. M. Hasel,</sup> "Ellen G. White and Creationism." For Ellen G. White nature and the Bible have the same Author, and therefore one can expect harmony between them. "Rightly understood, science and the written word agree, and each sheds light on the other." <sup>36Ellen G.</sup> White, Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students Regarding Christian Education (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press®, 1913), 426. For her the revealed Word of God and the natural world will be in agreement "for all truth, whether in

nature or in revelation, is consistent with itself in all its manifestations." <sup>37</sup>Ellen G. White, The Story of Patriarchs and Prophets (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press®, 1913), 114. Nevertheless, she held that the special revelation recorded in the Bible takes precedence over God's general revelation in nature. Nature, as it exists today, is distorted by sin. Nature is not inspired, but Scripture bears the quality of inspiration. Scripture therefore provides the lens that helps one to gain a reliable and correct understanding of the Creator's book of nature. *GOP* 307.3

Ellen G. White was keenly aware that such harmony is not possible when modern science is conducted independent of the God hypothesis or in opposition to God's Word. She writes: "I have been warned that henceforth we shall have a constant contest. Science, so-called, and religion will be placed in opposition to each other, because finite men do not comprehend the power and the greatness of God "38Ellen G. White, Evangelism (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald®, 1946), 593. (Italics supplied.) This science, falsely so called, is based on conceptions and theories of men to the exclusion of the wisdom of God as revealed in His written Word. She warned that "when professedly scientific men treat upon these subjects from a merely human point of view, they will assuredly come to wrong conclusions. . . . The greatest minds, if not guided by the word of God in their research, become bewildered in their attempts to trace the relationship of science and revelation." 39E. G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, 113. Her use of Scripture in this area becomes evident and significant when, for instance, she accepts the biblical record of the creation of this world in six literal days or when, among other things, she talks about the age of the earth 40See F. M. Hasel, "Ellen G. White and Creationism." and the historicity of the Flood. GOP 307.4

The special role and superior authority of Scripture in Ellen White's thinking becomes manifest in another facet of her use of Scripture—when she repeatedly displays implicit trust in the historical reliability and trustworthiness of the Bible. *GOP 308.1* 

Ellen G. White Acknowledges the Historicity and Cultural Context of the Bible

Ellen G. White recognized that "an understanding of the customs of those who lived in Bible times, of the location and time of events, is practical knowledge; for it aids in making clear the figures of the Bible and in bringing out the force of Christ's lessons." <sup>41E. G. White, Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students, 518. She was also sensitive to the fact that it is important for the interpreter to understand what meaning the text had for the original recipients: "Understanding what the words of Jesus meant to those who heard them, we may discern in them a new vividness and beauty, and may also gather for ourselves their deeper lessons." <sup>42Ellen G. White, Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press®, 1956), 1. GOP 308.2</sup></sup>

For Ellen G. White "the Bible is the most ancient and most comprehensive history that men possess. It came fresh from the fountain of eternal truth, and throughout the ages a divine hand has preserved its purity." <sup>43</sup>E. G. White, Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students, 52. Unlike modern critical scholarship, which largely questions the historicity and existence of many biblical figures and events, Ellen G. White repeatedly affirms the historical existence of all the biblical persons listed in the Bible. For her they are not mythical or mystical figures, but describe real persons. In her view the Bible functions as a historical report of people and events that are real and not in any way fictional. She unambiguously states: "The lives recorded in the Bible are authentic histories of actual individuals. From Adam down through successive generations to the times of the apostles, we have a plain, unvarnished account of what actually occurred and the genuine experience of real characters," 44E. G. White, Testimonies for the Church, 4:9, 10. The way she writes about biblical people affirms her strong conviction that the biblical characters were real historical persons. GOP 308.3

In a similar manner Ellen G. White affirms the historicity of historical events, such as the creation of this world and the worldwide flood in Noah's time. <sup>45</sup>Cf. Ellen G. White's statements on Creation in Patriarchs and Prophets, <sup>44</sup>ff.; and, on the Flood, in ibid., <sup>90</sup>ff. She uses the Bible and quotes Scripture in such a way that one gets the distinct impression that Ellen White believed that what Scripture states did take place and is a trustworthy report of historical facts. *GOP 308.4* 

The authentic histories of biblical individuals and the historical nature of major events tell us important things about God and His mighty power and wisdom to act in history, Ellen White concluded. God was not just active in the distant past, but is the same powerful God to save and act today. For her to diminish the historicity of actual individuals and events in the Bible would diminish the ability of God to do similar things today and in the future. *GOP* 308.5

Ellen G. White also affirms the prophetic nature of Scripture. In fact, she uses the Bible in such a way that it is imminently evident that she believed predictions about future events up to the end of earth's history that were made therein. The prophecies of the Messiah as well as prophecies about future nations and religious powers, particularly as they are described in the apocalyptic books Daniel and Revelation, foretell what will take place in the future. They are not statements that were written after the author had information about the events to come that he described (*no vaticinia ex eventu*). The fulfillment of biblical prophecies confirms, for her, the reliability and trustworthiness of Scripture. *GOP* 309.1

This positive stance toward the reliability and trustworthiness of Scripture is not restricted to its prophetic message. Ellen G. White also values the divinely revealed and inspired content of all of Scripture. GOP 309.2

#### Ellen G. White Uses Scripture as Propositional Revelation

Throughout her entire life Ellen G. White in her writings "envisioned concrete historical, spatio- temporal truths and assumed God's providence within the spatiotemporal flux of concrete human freedom and history." <sup>46</sup>Frank M. Hasel, "Was Ellen G. White a Fundamentalist?" in Martin Pröbstle, Gerald A. Klingbeil, and Martin G. Klingbeil, eds., "For You Have Strengthened Me": Biblical and Theological Studies in Honor of Gerhard Pfandl in Celebration of His Sixty-Fifth Birthday (St. Peter am Hart: Seminar Schloss Bogenhofen, 2007), 359. For her, Scripture is not culturally conditioned <sup>47</sup>On the issue of cultural conditioning of inspired writings, see the excellent article by Alberto R. Timm, "Divine Accommodation and Cultural Conditioning of the Inspired Writings," Journal of the Adventist Theological Society 19, nos. 1-2 (2008): 161-174 (also available at

http://www.atsjats.org/publication\_file.php?pub\_id=342&journ). and hence relative, but is culturally constituted through God's process of revelation and inspiration and therefore normative and authoritative. Thus she consistently uses Scripture in a way that affirms its objective, culture-transcending, propositional truth. For Ellen G. White the God of the Bible knows everything. He has revealed some things in a reliable and trustworthy manner so that we can know a small part of what God truly and exhaustively knows. The Bible, for her, is a guidebook through which God speaks, so that we can specifically know His will and can be led to the right way. "We all need a guide through the many strait places in life as much as the sailor needs a pilot over the sandy bar or up the rocky river, and where is this guide to be found? We point you . . . to the Bible." 48Ellen G. White, The Faith I Live By (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald® <sup>1973), 7.</sup> Ellen White wrote that "the Lord has preserved this Holy Book by His own miraculous power in its present shape—a chart or guidebook to the human family to show them the way to heaven." <sup>49lbid., 13.</sup> Thus, for her "the Bible is a chart, showing us the waymarks of truth. Those who are acquainted with this chart will be enabled to tread with certainty in the path of duty, wherever they may be called to go." 501bid., 7. Ellen G. White herself continually endeavored to found what she was saying upon what was written in the Bible. This she could do because she affirmed the unity of Scripture. GOP 309.3

#### Ellen G. White Affirms the Unity of Scripture

Ellen G. White believed that the message of Scripture is so unified that it is legitimate to interpret one passage in the light of another. In an inconsistent, uninspired document, this principle would not work. She recognizes that "the books of the Bible present a wide contrast in style, as well as a diversity in the nature of the subjects unfolded. Different forms of expression are employed by different writers; often the same truth is more strikingly presented by one than by another. And as several writers present a subject under varied aspects and relations, there may appear, to the superficial, careless, or prejudiced reader, to be discrepancy or contradiction, where the thoughtful, reverent student, with clearer insight, discerns the underlying harmony." <sup>51E.</sup> G. White, Selected Messages, <sup>1:25.</sup>This

vital unity underlying the diversity in subjects in Scripture is also expressed in the following statement: "The word of God, as a whole, is a perfect chain, one portion linking into and explaining another." <sup>52Ellen</sup> G. White, Early Writings (Battle Creek, Mich.: Review and Herald®, 1882), 221. GOP 310.1

This marvelous unity in Scripture<sup>53On</sup> the unity of Scripture, see F. M. Hasel. "Presuppositions in the Interpretation of Scripture," 37, 38; see also Gerhard F. Hasel, "The Unity of the Bible" (originally presented in 1973), now available Biblical Research Institute shelf as http://www.adventistbiblicalresearch.org/sites/default/files/pdf/unitvofthebible.pdf (accessed June 29, 2015). is derived from its divine inspiration, Ellen White contended. This unity manifests itself in a harmonious view of the many diverse parts of Scripture— one part buttressing another, another part illuminating some other. That Scripture can be compared with Scripture requires another characteristic of Ellen G. White's use of the Bible: the clarity of the Word. GOP 310.2

#### Ellen G. White Affirms the Clarity of Scripture

Ellen G. White was convinced that the Bible can be read and understood by all, not just the educated and specialized theologians, 54Cf. E. G. White, "Our Great Treasure-House," 7Scripture is sufficiently clear or self-evident in its meaning that it can be understood by every honest seeker. The Scripture, she contended. is clear, not because all of Scripture is perfectly perspicuous and all readers understand absolutely everything the text says. Rather, she believed that Scripture is sufficiently clear or self-evident in its meaning to function as a guide to those passages that appear less clear 55On the clarity of Scripture, see F. M. Hasel, "Presuppositions in the Interpretation of Scripure," 39, 40. See also D. A. Carson, "Is the Doctrine of Claritas Scripturae Still Relevant Today?" in D. A. Carson, ed., Collected Writings on Scripture (Wheaton, III.: Crossway, 2010), 179-193. For Ellen G. White the meaning of Scripture is not polyvalent, and it is not the reader who determines the meaning of the text but Scripture that interprets itself. While Scripture does not give an exhaustive knowledge of God, it nevertheless does provide a true knowledge of God, and we can truly come to a correct understanding of God and His will for us.GOP 310.3

The clarity (and unity) of Scripture enables Ellen G. White to use Scripture to confront false teachings and to promote it as a book that can be understood by men and women, boys and girls of every stripe and socioeconomic class, irrespective of their formal education. It empowers and ennobles every reader. The clarity of Scripture also entails the following important aspect: God in Scripture so discloses Himself that He provides us with a unique, grand metanarrative that provides us with a unique perspective of life and history. GOP 311.1

#### Ellen G. White Affirms a Divine Metanarrative That Is Disclosed in Scripture

It has been recognized that there is a unique linkage between the Bible, character development, and the metanarrative of the great controversy theme in Ellen G. White's writings. <sup>56So Douglass, 420</sup>. Indeed, her use of Scripture is characterized by the presence of a divine metanarrative that serves as a framework for reading various

parts of Scripture and providing a unique perspective on life and history. It is the "grand theme of redemption," 57 Ellen G. White, Christ's Object Lessons (Battle Creek, Mich.: Review and Herald®, 1900), 129; idem, "The Truth as It Is in Jesus," Signs of the Times, June 16, 1898, 2-the "plan of salvation," 58The expression "plan of salvation" occurs 911 times in all her writings and includes some of the repetitions in compilations. that is expressed in the cosmic metanarrative of the "great controversy." 59Fritz Guv has pointed out that more than a century before the idea of narrative theology came into scholarly vogue, Ellen G. White has expressed her theology in "the form of a theology of cosmic history" ("Theology," 151). The movement from Creation through the Fall to God's ultimate re-creation; His divine plan of redemption that climaxes in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ; Christ's ministry in the heavenly sanctuary; His second coming in glory; and the creation of the new earth—all of these subthemes have received extensive attention in Ellen G. White's writings. In fact, her great controversy theme offers a cosmic conflict theodicy and divine metanarrative that is more thoroughly presented than that of anyone in church history. 60According to Gregory A. Boyd, Ellen White has "integrated a warfare perspective into the problem of evil and the doctrine of God perhaps more thoroughly than anyone else in church history" (Gregory A. Boyd, God at War: The Bible and Spiritual Conflict (Downers Grove, III.: InterVarsity, 1997), 307, note 44. It has been aptly said that "the controversy between Christ and his angels and Satan and his angels is the most comprehensive framework for her entire corpus." 61Patrick, "Learning From Ellen White's Perception and Use of Scripture," 123. Cf. also the discussion of the great controversy theme in Ellen White's writings in Douglass, esp. 256-277; idem, "Great Controversy Theme," in The Ellen G. White Encyclopedia, 850-853; idem, The Heartbeat of Adventism: The Great Controversy Theme in the Writings of Ellen G. White (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press®, 2010); and J. Battistone, The Great Controversy Theme in the E. G. White Writings (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 1978). According to Ellen G. White, the student should learn to view the word [the Bible] as a whole, and to see the relation of its parts. He should gain a knowledge of its grand central theme, of God's original purpose for the world, of the rise of the great controversy, and of the work of redemption. He should understand the nature of the two principles that are contending for supremacy, and should learn to trace their working. . . . He should

see how this controversy enters into every phase of human experience; how in every act of life he himself reveals the one or the other of the two antagonistic motives; and how, whether he will nor not, he is even now deciding upon which side of the controversy he will be found 62E. G. White, Education, 190. GOP 311.2

In this great controversy between good and evil, the love of God for humanity and God's willingness to do all He can to redeem us from sin is one of her major theological themes. The other is faithfulness to Scripture. <sup>63</sup>See Denis Fortin, "Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan, The" in The Ellen G. White Encyclopedia, 849. GOP 312.1

While Jesus is central in this metanarrative and in her theology and plays a prominent role in her exposition of Scripture, she does not use Christ as a hermeneutical key with which to judge what parts of Scripture are acceptable and which parts are not. <sup>64Cf. Frank M.</sup> Hasel, "Christ-Centered Hermeneutics: Prospects and Challenges for Adventist Biblical Interpretation," Ministry, December 2012, 6-9; idem, "Presuppositions in the Interpretation of Scripture," <sup>40-43</sup>. She does not criticize Scripture—not even in the name of Christ—but affirms Jesus as the Christ of the Bible and all of Scripture as His binding word. <sup>65On</sup> the relationship between Christ and Scripture, see F. M. Hasel, "Presuppositions in the Interpretation of Scripture," <sup>42</sup>, <sup>43</sup>. GOP 312 2

Beyond these foundational aspects of Ellen G. White's use of Scripture one can detect a variety of other specific uses of Scripture in her writings. The complexity of her use of Scripture deserves a more comprehensive treatment than the narrow limits of this paper allow. 66Cottrell stated already in 1974 that "an exhaustive analysis has yet to be made of the biblical hermeneutic commended and practiced by Ellen White" ("Ellen G. White's Use of the Bible," 149), and he added: "Such a study would be eminently worthwhile" ("Ellen G. White's Use of the Bible," 154). More than 40 years later this task still awaits a thorough investigation. It seems a gross oversimplification, however, to categorize her use of Scripture as simply exegetical, theological, and homiletical, 67Recently some have claimed that "Ellen White's use of Scripture is usually that of an evangelist or homiletician, not an exegete" (Graeme S. Bradford, More Than a Prophet: How We Lost and Found Again the Real Ellen White [Berrien Springs, Mich.: Biblical Perspectives, 2006], 208) and that "there is no evidence to suggest that when

she was commenting on a passage of Scripture that the meaning she was giving was the one and only true meaning" (ibid., 209). Similarly Jon Paulien, who states: "While more study needs to be done on this guestion, it is my opinion that Ellen White rarely uses Scripture exegetically (i.e., being primarily concerned with the biblical writer's intent" (Jon Pauline, "Ellen White and the Interpretation of Revelation" [unpublished paper], as quoted in Bradford, 210). Jon Pauline has also published his opinion in "The Interpreter's Use of the Writings of Ellen G. White," in Frank B. Holbrook, ed., Symposium on Revelation—Book 1 (Silver Spring, Md.: Biblical Research Institute, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1992), 163-172; and more recently in idem, "Ellen White's Use of Scripture," in Cole and Petersen, 171-196. Similarly Pfandl, who writes that Ellen G. White "frequently used Scripture homiletically" ("Ellen G. White and Hermeneutics," 313-318); and Douglass, 420. Robert K. McIver even states: "In sum, in Christ's Object Lessons, Ellen White uses a mildly allegorical approach to the parable [of the 10 maidens—Matthew 25:1-13], which she sets in the context of the church just before the second coming of Jesus" (Robert K. McIver, "Hermeneutics of Parable Interpretation in Ellen White Compared to Those of Archbishop Trench," in Cole and Petersen, 148). McIver concludes his evaluation of her use of allegory as a method of interpreting the parables, although there is difference between them in this regard. "Compared to Trench, [Ellen G.] White is relatively conservative in the amount of allegorisation. Not every element of the parable is pressed for a meaning—only those that are most important to the meaning" (ibid., 150). It seems that some resort to a "homiletically" or (mildly) allegorically use of Scripture to describe, in friendly terminology, a use of Scripture that is quite problematic, because biblical texts are seemingly used out of context or in a manner not in harmony with its original biblical context. It does not help to postulate such a problematic use for biblical writers as well because it only intensifies the problem. This of course raises significant hermeneutical questions that also have substantial implications for our understanding of inspiration, not just for the writings of Ellen G. White but also for the biblical texts Cf. Frank M. Hasel. "Reflections on the Authority and themselves. Trustworthiness of Scripture," in Issues in Revelation and Inspiration, ed. Frank Holbrook and Leo Van Dolson, Adventist Theological Society Occasional Papers, vol. 1 (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Adventist Theological Society Publications, 1992), 201-220. because many other uses are discernible in her writings.GOP 312.3

In the remaining part of the paper I will attempt to give a brief overview of some other aspects of her use of Scripture that can be discerned in her writings. GOP 313.1

# A Prophetic Use of Scripture

It has been recognized that if we consider Ellen G. White's biblical hermeneutic, "her use of Scripture comports both with the way in which later inspired writers of the Bible made use of earlier inspired writings and with sound contemporary biblical scholarship." 68Cottrell, "Ellen G. White's Use of the Bible," 149. Cf. also Gerhard Pfandl, "Ellen G. White and Hermeneutics," 314; see also Clinton Wahlen, "The Use of Scripture by Bible Writers" (chapter 4, above). In this sense one can say that Ellen G. White uses Scripture not just homiletically or in a pastoral sense, as any other counselor or preacher might do. Rather, she uses Scripture with prophetic guidance and insight. This involves a variety of different aspects. GOP 313.2

Often she employs Scripture in a fairly straightforward exposition, where her use is factual and historical, in the sense that she affirms the historicity and trustworthy factual description of biblical events. 69Cf., for instance, her description of the worldwide flood during Noah's time (E. G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, 90ff.) or the event of the exodus from Egypt (idem, Patriarchs and Prophets, 281ff.), both of which are highly disputed in modern critical scholarship. Frequently, when she narrates a biblical event or discusses a passage of Scripture, she makes a direct quotation of that passage. 70Cf., for instance, The Desire of Ages (Oakland: Pacific Press®, 1898), 114, where she speaks about Jesus being let into the wilderness by the Spirit. This factual and historical use of Scripture may be seen especially in such works as Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, where Christ's major sermons are recorded; or Christ's Object Lessons, where she deals with Christ's parables; or in her books Patriarchs and Prophets, Prophets and Kings, The Desire of Ages, and The Acts of the Apostles, where she deals with the biblical history of people and events from Creation to the New Testament church. It is not uncommon in her exposition of Scripture to find confirmation of some details that are reported in some Gospels or biblical books but not in others, thus confirming and strengthening what the Bible says in some places even though it is not mentioned in others. Because of her prophetic giftedness she even provides additional factual information on some details of the biblical record that go beyond what the biblical writers have stated. while avoiding any contradiction of the biblical text. 71For instance,

when she describes the scenes when the apostle Paul stood before Nero, defending his faith, in Ellen G. White, The Acts of the Apostles (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press®, 1911), 492-497. Or when she describes the situation of the people of Israel when they were leaving Egypt (idem, Patriarchs and Prophets, 283, 284), or when Mary and Joseph had to flee to Egypt (idem, The Desire of Ages, 65). Similarly, her description of what happened in heaven when the cosmic conflict between Satan and God began is another prominent example of this phenomenon, where she provides further prophetic insights into biblical statements that are much more terse (cf. Rev. 12:1-9 and Ellen G. White's description in much greater detail in idem, Patriarchs and Prophets, 33-43; idem, Spiritual Gifts, [vol. 1] [Battle Creek, Mich.: James White, 1858], 17-18; idem, The Great Controversy, passim). At times she provides information where the biblical text is silent. <sup>72</sup>For example, when she states that the book of Hebrews was written by the apostle Paul (cf. E. G. White, The Great Controversy, 347, 411; idem, Patriarchs and Prophets, 357). GOP 313 3

# A Practical Use of Scripture

A close reading of Ellen G. White's writings makes obvious that she had a significant interest in practical spirituality rather than theological exposition or speculation. For her "the Bible was given for practical purposes," <sup>73E.</sup> G. White, Selected Messages, 1:20. allowing the biblical truths to impact and transform our lives, our thinking, and our Christian behavior; thereby preparing our character for the second advent of Christ. Thus she uses Scripture for instruction, admonition, and encouragement because for her character development is the highest goal that can be achieved in education. <sup>74Cf.</sup> E. G. White, Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students, 61, 68. GOP

Part of her practical prophetic use of Scripture is her conviction that a study of the Bible needs to find application in the individual life and in the mission of the church. "Truths learned are to be applied in daily experience. Every dimension of church life is to be guided by Scripture." <sup>75Cf. Patrick, "Learning From Ellen White's Perception and Use of Scripture," 137. She called attention to the Bible, urged obedience to the Bible, and applied the Bible to her own life and the lives of those to whom she wrote, encouraging people to be faithful to Scripture and commit its verses to memory and heart. Her practical use of Scripture also includes pastoral concerns. *GOP 314.2*</sup>

#### A Pastoral Use of Scripture

Her pastoral use of <sup>76</sup>What I have called pastoral use of Scripture others have termed as "homiletical" use of Scripture (cf. Pfandl, 314). I think that a pastoral use is broader than just homiletical. Furthermore, any responsible pastor—and preacher for that matter—will strive to be faithful to the original and overall message of Scripture, and will not twist and distort the meaning of Scripture. Scripture becomes evident when she applies Scripture with prophetic insight, wisdom, and pastoral intention to various people who needed personal guidance, direction, edification, exhortation, encouragement, and correction. She often takes biblical texts literally and uses them at face value to provide counsel, advice, and direction. <sup>77</sup>Cf., for instance, when she warned not to marry an unbeliever (E. G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, 174, 175; idem, Testimonies for the Church,

Ellen White also uses words of Scripture that were familiar to her. and applied the message or the encouragement of a biblical passage to a current situation even though the original biblical context may have addressed a different situation. In doing so, she is not distorting or twisting Scripture; neither is she unfaithful to Scripture. Instead Ellen White applies the message and gist of Scripture to new situations, helping us to be reminded of God's wonderful acts in history and His great faithfulness so that we realize that the same God who acted in the past is alive today and can do the same wonderful things for His people as He did in the past. This might be similar to what the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews is doing in chapter 13 when he gives some concluding admonitions and makes the following statement: "Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, 'I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you' [Josh. 1:5], so that we can confidently say, 'The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What will man do to me?' [Ps. 118:6]" (verses 5, 6, NASB). Just as the biblical writer of Hebrews aligns very different passages from the Old Testament that affirm God's faithfulness and remind the reader of God's wonderful acts in behalf of His people in the past, to encourage the believers in new situations, Ellen G. White also uses Scripture pastorally to uplift, comfort, remind, and encourage the reader today to trust God in similar ways. In those cases she does not strictly work as an exegete, but uses Scripture to apply the general gist of its message to new situations as an encouragement. GOP 315.1

#### **Echoes of Scripture and Allusions to Scripture**

Ellen G. White was so steeped in the language and thought world of the Bible that is was natural for her to use biblical language, biblical images, and biblical texts to convey the message she had received or wanted to deliver. <sup>78So Pfandl, 314.</sup> At times she simply alluded to a passage of Scripture, sort of echoing the words of Scripture rather than directly quoting the Bible. Sometimes she would briefly refer to a biblical statement or passage while having in mind the larger biblical context in which the statement is found. Or she appeals to the larger spiritual message and the imagery that is expressed in the words of a particular passage and applies it to other situations. *GOP 315.2* 

For instance, the language of 1 Corinthians 2:9 can be used by Ellen G. White to evoke associations of the new earth (cf. E. G. White, The Great Controversy, 675), i.e., where we will experience something that indeed "no eye has seen and no ear has heard." While the apostle Paul referred to the wonderful plan of salvation. which of course includes heaven. Ellen G. White uses the beautiful wording of this passage to describe the new earth, thus illustrating that God has something wonderful prepared for His people that is beyond our imagination. 79Cf. ibid., 315, 316. In other places Ellen G. White also uses this biblical passage in its more narrow exegetical meaning (cf. E. G. White, The Desire of Ages, 412). Thus at times she echoes biblical imagery and employs biblical phrases as a homiletical device to illustrate and elaborate on something about which she is speaking. In such situations Ellen G. White applies biblical phrases and messages not in an exegetical way, but employs biblical words and phrases because they create a certain impression she wants to communicate, or they illustrate a biblical idea she wants to make clear.GOP 315.3

#### Theological and Exegetical Use of Scripture

While Ellen G. White uses the Bible to accomplish pastoral purposes, her use of Scripture is not just for personal edification, exhortation, and correction, i.e., for practical purposes. She also uses Scripture to sustain doctrinal issues and to clarify issues of faith 80For instance, when she quotes Scripture to support and confirm the biblical day of rest, the Sabbath, or when she addresses the state of the dead and the biblical teaching on hell, or what the Bible teaches about the millennium or Christ's ministry in the heavenly sanctuary, to name but some doctrinal issues, where she employed Scripture to support the biblical teaching on these topics or where she corrects false concepts that were prevalent among many Christians during her time. She also speaks with doctrinal and theological intention when she traces the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation where she makes specific applications in reference to Daniel 7-9 and Revelation 6-17. On Ellen G. White and her interpretation of the book of Revelation, see Jon Paulien, "The Interpreter's Use of the Writings of Ellen G. White," 163-172; and idem, "Ellen G. White and Revelation," in Holbrook, ed., Symposium on Revelation—Book 1, 363-373. GOP 316.1

Careful readers of Ellen G. White have repeatedly noted her keen perception when employing Bible texts, doing so in a manner entirely in keeping with the original biblical text in Hebrew and Greek. It is amazing how often she brings out remarkable theological insights into the original meaning of the biblical text even though she never studied Hebrew or Greek. <sup>81See</sup> Richard M. Davidson, "Ellen White's Insights Into Scripture in Light of the Original Biblical Languages" (chapter 7). While Ellen G. White made many helpful comments on biblical passages, she did not comment and interpret every text in the Bible. Neither did she see herself as the exegete or interpreter of Scripture who made personal Bible study superfluous. Yet she often commented and interpreted the Bible in a responsible theological manner. *GOP* 316.2

A theological use of Scripture is present when crucial biblical themes or ideas are employed or alluded to without explicit quotation. 82Cf. Clinton Wahlen, "The Use of Scripture by Bible Writers" (chapter 4). It has been said that to "interpret a text theologically means to look for the implications the text has for the larger

theological scheme contained in Scripture. The text is seen not only in its literary and historical context but also in the context of the divine revelation, as a whole." 83So Pfandl, 314. GOP 316.3

An illustration of her ability to use Scripture theologically as well as exegetically is her use of John 5:39. 84Here we closely follow Pfandl's illustration in 317. where the King James Bible translates Jesus' words as an imperative: "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me." The Greek epauvate (ereunate) can be a present imperative or a present indicative and the context seems to favor the indicative: "You study the scriptures diligently, supposing that in them you have eternal life; their testimony points to me" (REB). Pfandl has pointed out that "many Jews believed that knowledge of the law would assure them eternal life. But Jesus reminds them that the Scriptures in which they thought to find eternal life were the very writings which testified of Him." 85lbid. While Ellen G. White frequently uses the phrase from John 5:39 to encourage Bible study, <sup>86Cf.</sup> Ellen G. White, Counsels on Sabbath School Work (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald®, 1938), 17, 21, <sup>29.</sup> thus showing pastoral wisdom in endorsing something Scripture encourages us to do, she is also aware of its exegetical meaning. In The Desire of Ages she relates the situation as it is reported in John, and uses the Revised Version instead of the KJV to bring out its exegetical meaning: "Ye search the Scriptures, because ye think that in them ye have eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of Me. John 5:39. RV." 87E. G. White, The Desire of Ages, 211. This is also an illustration how Ellen G. White did not slavishly depend on the KJV but showed a keen perception of the message of the original biblical text. GOP 316.4

Ellen White demonstrates another theological use of Scripture when she sometimes conflates biblical concepts to express valid biblical ideas with words that do not precisely match their original biblical usage, but are very well within the general biblical framework of God's salvific work. *GOP 317.1* 

For example: in the Bible the concept of the baptism of the Holy Spirit occurs only seven times in the New Testament, interestingly always as a verbal construction, "baptize in the Holy Spirit" (*Mark* 

1:8, Matt. 3:11, Luke 3:16, John 1:33, Acts 1:5, 11:15, 16, 1 Cor. 12:13), though other texts may refer to the phenomenon in other ways. In the New Testament the baptism of the Holy Spirit seems to refer to the initial empowerment of God's people at Pentecost that enabled them to start and fulfill their gospel commission. In the New Testament the baptism of the Holy Spirit also seems to be connected with the water baptism of the believer. Beyond this initial baptism with the Holy Spirit, the believer is encouraged to be filled with the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:18). While Ellen G. White also makes reference to this initial and special baptism at Pentecost and seems to acknowledge that baptism, and the baptism of the Holy Spirit belong together, 88Cf. Ellen G. White, Sketches From the Life of Paul (Battle Creek, Mich.: Review and Herald®, 1883), 130. she frequently uses and employs the expression "baptism with the Holy Spirit" to emphasize the present need of believers to be fully committed to God and to be empowered and filled by the Holy Spirit to do their task and to exemplify Christ's character in them. For her, being filled with the Holy Spirit and being baptized with the Holy Spirit often shows the same effect. Thus there can be for her a "fuller baptism of the Holy Spirit" 89Ellen G. White, "Appeals for Our Missions," in Historical Sketches of the Foreign Missions of the Seventh-day Adventists (Basle, Switzerland: Imprimerie Polyglotte, 1886), 294; idem, Notebook Leaflets From the Elmshaven Library (Payson, Ariz.: Leaves-of-Autumn, 1979), 1:30. or a "greater baptism of the Holy Spirit" <sup>90</sup>Ellen G. White, "An Appeal," Review and Herald, Oct. 12, <sup>1886, 627.</sup>90 or "daily a fresh baptism of the Holy Spirit," as Jesus received, 91Ellen G. White, Christ's Object Lessons, 139; idem, Pastoral Ministry (Silver Spring, Md.: Ministerial Association, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1995), 283; idem, "Asking to Give," Review and Herald, Aug. 11, 1910, 3; idem, "'After That Thou Shalt Cut It Down,' " Signs of the Times, Nov. 21, 1895, 6. and we can and should receive too. 92E. G. White, The Great Controversy, 69, 70; idem, Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students, 131. Thus Ellen G. White seems to conflate the biblical concepts of the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the filling with the Holy Spirit, and uses the expression "baptism of the Holy Spirit" to describe something that biblically corresponds more to the daily filling of the Holy Spirit. GOP 317.2

From the above-mentioned uses, it is obvious that Ellen G. White

used Scripture in much more than a strictly exegetical manner. In fact, it has been pointed out that her "most characteristic role was that of an evangelist—not an exegete, nor a theologian, as such, but a preacher and an evangelist. . . . The prophetic and hortatory mode was more characteristic of her than the exegetical." <sup>93Raoul</sup> Dederen, "Ellen White's Doctrine of Scripture," in "Are There Prophets in the Modern Church?" Ministry Supplement, July 1977, 24H, as quoted in Pfandl, 318. Thus, at times she is able to use the same biblical passage in different ways. Hence it is important to carefully study how she is using a particular biblical text. It would be wrong to see every single statement she makes about a biblical text as the ultimate interpretation of a biblical passage, thereby neglecting our own careful investigation of the biblical text. *GOP 318.1* 

#### Conclusion

Ellen G. White's use of Scripture is rich and wide-ranging. She consistently affirms the Bible as the church's only rule for faith and practice, and the test of all Christian experience. She even gives Scripture priority over nature, which God created. Scripture is inspired and carries divine authority and hence functions as the norm for theology and practical life. For her, Scripture is its own expositor. It is possible to compare scripture with scripture because Ellen G. White believed in the unity and clarity of Scripture. In her writings she employed and applied virtually the whole of Scripture, Old Testament and New Testament. The apocalyptic books of Daniel and Revelation provided the backdrop for her presentation of a cosmic metanarrative that can be seen as a comprehensive framework for much of what she wrote GOP 318.2

In her use of the Bible, Ellen G. White consistently displayed a reverence and deep love for the Word of God. Her approach to the Bible is characterized by respect and gratefulness toward the Word of God. Alberto R. Timm has aptly pointed out that "we should also take into more serious consideration the respectful way in which all true prophets dealt with the writings of other prophets. None of the New Testament prophets pointed out factual errors in the Old Testament, nor did Ellen White in regard to the Bible." 94Alberto R. Timm, "Understanding Inspiration: The Symphonic and Wholistic Nature of Scripture," August 1999. 15 available Ministry, (also http://docs.adventistarchives.org/docs/MIN/MIN19990801-V72-08 B

.pdf#view=fit.). Ellen G. White always approaches the Bible in the spirit of Christ, in the spirit of biblical writers, and in the attitude of a humble learner affirming the trustworthiness and infallibility of Scripture. While she is aware that in transmission and the process of copying the Bible some mistakes were made, it is remarkable that she never saw it as her task to pinpoint these mistakes or elaborate on any deficiencies or so-called biblical errors. Instead she emphasized the trustworthiness and sufficiency of Scripture, which is the living Word of God. GOP 318.3

May we be inspired to learn from Ellen G. White to use the Bible in a similar way, building trust in God's Word rather than sowing doubt, using the Bible to build faith rather than using it to destroy

faith through an attitude of critical skepticism. May we be grounded in Scripture, obedient to Scripture, ever learning from and faithful to Scripture, just as Ellen G. White was, so that the living Word of God can change our lives and strengthen our faith in Jesus Christ, our only Savior, and kindle our love for God the Father through the work of the Holy Spirit. *GOP 319.1* 

# Chapter 17 - Ellen G. White's Use of Extrabiblical Sources

#### Jud Lake

As we recall Ellen White's prophetic ministry a century after she laid down her pen, the old allegation that she plagiarized much of her writings continues unabated. From D. M. Can-right's claim that she was a "great plagiarist" to the contemporary Internet allegations that she copied 90 percent of her material, the charge that Ellen White derived her insights from human authors rather than God persists as the most popular criticism of her prophetic ministry. 10n D. M. Canright, see The Life of Mrs. E. G. White, Seventh-Day Adventist Prophet, Hei False Claims Refuted (Salt Lake City: Grant Shurtliff, 1998; first published 1919), chap. 10, "A Great Plagiarist," 111-123; and Ron Graybill, "D. M. Canright in Healdsburg, 1889: The Genesis of the Plagiarism Charge," Insight, Oct. 21, 1980, 7-10; on the Internet charges of 90 percent copying, see Kevin L. Morgan, White Lie Soap: For Removal of Lingering Stains on Ellen White's Integrity as an Inspired Author (Millers Creek, N.C.: Honor Him Publishers, 2013), 62, 64, 79, notes 6 and 9, for a list of several anti-Ellen White Web sites that perpetuate this charge. The underlying issue behind this charge is the way in which Ellen White used her sources. Did she copy mindlessly from other writers of her day, as critics claim, or was something more at work? Was she within the boundaries of "fair use"? Was she honest about using sources? Did inspiration accommodate prophets using the uninspired writings of others? How exactly did she use her sources? In answering these questions, this chapter will (1) provide a concise history of Adventist scholarship on this issue; (2) set forth seven facts about Ellen White's use of sources; and (3) present five exhibits of how she used her sources. GOP 320.1

# A Concise History of Adventist Scholarship

Although Adventist leaders have addressed this issue over the past century 2See, for example, W. C. White and D. E. Robinson, Brief Statements Regarding the Writings of Ellen G. White (Washington, D.C.: Ellen G. White Estate, 1933); and Francis D. Nichol, Ellen G. White and Her Critics (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald®, 1951), in which chapters 28-30 were devoted to the plagiarism charge. since the early 1980s when Walter Rea publicly raised the issue of plagiarism in his book *The White Lie* <sup>3Walter Rea,</sup> The White Lie (Turlock, Calif.: M & R Publishers, 1982); see Morgan, 9, 10, for more details on the publicity of Rea's work during this time. The historical-critical method of literary analysis was first applied to Ellen White's writings within the church (for example, in Roy Branson and Herold D. Weiss, "Ellen White: A Subject for Adventist Scholarship," Spectrum 2, no. 4 [Autumn 1970]: 30-33; William S. Peterson, "A Textual and Historical Study of Ellen G. White's Account of the French Revolution," ibid., 57-69; W. P. Bradley, "Ellen G. White and Her Writings," Spectrum 3, no. 2 [Spring 1971]: 43-51) and followed by an avalanche of similar studies (for example, Ron L. Numbers, Prophetess of Health: A Study of Ellen G. White [New York: Harper & Row, 1976]; and Ingemar Lindén, The Last Trump: An Historico-Genetical Study of Some Important Chapters in the Making and Development of the Seventh-day Adventist Church [Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1978]). For more discussion on the challenges to Ellen White's prophetic ministry, see Alberto Timm, "Development of Contemporary Issues Related to Ellen G. White," Ellen White and Current Issues Symposium, vol. 9 (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, 2013), 90-<sup>110</sup>. the scholarly research on Ellen White's use of sources has been extensive. In a sense, some Adventists were caught off guard during this turbulent time in the church's history because the plagiarism charge and the church's earlier responses had long been forgotten. <sup>4See note 2, above.</sup> The mechanical view of inspiration had failed to explain the literary parallels to other sources in Ellen White's writings. 5Herbert Douglass suggested, in his Messenger of the Lord: The Prophetic Ministry of Ellen White (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press®, 1998), 460, 461, that because a wrong view of inspiration prevailed throughout the twentieth century with no open discussion on Ellen White's literary borrowing, the church was caught by surprise in the early 1980s by the plagiarism charge. For a discussion of the challenges the church was facing during the turbulent early 1980s, see William Johnsson, "Crossroads in Adventism: An Inside Perspective on the Modern Seventh-day Adventist Church," Ellen White and Current Issues

Symposium, vol. 4 (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, 2008), 39-47. Consequently, many lost faith and confidence in her as an inspired author. Even before Rea's book was published, however, the White Estate had been working on the issue of Ellen White's literary borrowing, and eventually produced a flurry of scholarly research that was released throughout the 1980s and 1990s. 6See Merlin Burt, "Bibliographic Essay on Publications About Ellen G. White," in The Ellen G. White Encyclopedia (EGWE), 2nd ed., ed. Denis Fortir and Jerry Moon (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald®, 2014), 199, note 213, for a listing of these numerous publications. It should also be noted that book 3 of Selected Messages was published in 1980, which contains the letters of W. C. White to L. E. Froom on the subject of Ellen White's literary borrowing (Ellen G. White, Selected Messages [Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald®, 1958, 1980], 3:451-465).

Two major studies produced during this time made a significant contribution to the question of Ellen White's use of sources. First was the study of the legal issue by attorney Vincent Ramik, senior partner in the then-Washington, D.C.-based law firm of Diller, Ramik, and Wight, specialists in patent, trademark, and copyright law. After spending 300-plus hours researching more than 1,000 cases in American literary law that spanned Ellen White's lifetime (1790-1915), Ramik produced a 27-page legal opinion, or "lawyer's brief," with 53 source-citation footnotes, and concluded in the August 14, 1981, document "that Ellen G. White was not a plagiarist and her works did not constitute copyright infringement/piracy." 7Vincent L. Ramik, "The Ramik Report: Memorandum of Law Literary Property Rights, 1790-1915" (Ellen G. White Estate, Aug. 14, 1981, SDoc), 26, 27. The second study was the Life of Christ Research Project directed by Fred Veltman, professor of New Testament literature at Pacific Union College. Veltman and his team devoted eight years (1981-1988) to the preparation of a detailed analysis of 15 randomly selected chapters in The Desire of Ages and produced a 2,561page report that concluded that although Ellen White used numerous sources in her writing, she was not slavishly dependent on these sources. Rather, she customized them to "enhance her and serve her purposes," and demonstrated authorial independence and originality. 88. Fred Veltman, Full Report of the Life of Christ Research Project, 4 vols. (Life of Christ Research Project Review Committee, 1988); idem, "The Study of The Desire of Ages Sources," in The Ellen G. White Encyclopedia, 766-770 (citation in 770). GOP 321.1

In more recent years Ellen White's use of sources has continued to receive attention in such works as Leonard Brand and Don S. McMahon. The Prophet and Her Critics: A Striking New Analysis Refutes the Charges That Ellen G. White "Borrowed" the Health Message, and Don S. McMahon, Acquired or Inspired: Exploring the Origins of the Adventist Lifestyle, both published in 2005. In 2009 E. Marcella Anderson King and Kevin L. Morgan published More Than Words: A Study of Inspiration and Ellen White's Use of Sources in the Desire of Ages, which built upon the Veltman study and made it more accessible to the general reading audience. In 2013 Kevin L. Morgan released White Lie Soap: For Removal of Lingering Stains on Ellen White's Integrity as an Inspired Writer. which continued to build upon and expand the Veltman study. In the 2014 release of the Ellen G. White Encyclopedia Denis Fortin authored a significant article, "Plagiarism," which dealt with this charge and Ellen White's use of sources. In 2015 Tim Poirier authored "Ellen White and Sources: The Plagiarism Debate," chapter 11 in Understanding Ellen White: The Life and Work of the Most Influential Voice in Adventist History, edited by Merlin Burt and commissioned by the White Estate trustees. Finally, the Ellen G. White Estate Web site, whiteestate.org, contains material on the plagiarism issue. 9Leonard Brand and Don S. McMahon, The Prophet and Her Critics: A Striking New Analysis Refutes the Charges That Ellen G. White "Borrowed" the Health Message (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press®, 2005); Don S. McMahon, Acquired or Inspired: Exploring the Origins of the Adventist Lifestyle (Victoria, Australia: Signs Publishing, 2005); E. Marcella Anderson King and Kevin L. Morgan, More Than Words: A Study in Inspiration and Ellen White's Use of Sources in The Desire of Ages (Millers Creek, N.C.: Honor Him Publishers, 2009); Morgan, White Lie Soap; Denis Fortin, "Plagiarism," in The Ellen G. White Encyclopedia, 1028-1035; Tim Poirier, "Ellen White and Sources: The Plagiarism Debate," in Merlin Burt, ed., Understanding Ellen White: The Life and Work of the Most Influential Voice in Adventist History (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press®, 2015); see also Kevin Morgan with David J. Conkin, "Plagiarism: A Historical and Cultural Survey," Ministry, August 2007, 22-24; idem, "Plagiarism: Alternate Explanations?" Ministry, October 2007, 20-22; idem, "Was Ellen White a Plagiarist?" Ministry, December 2007, 21-23; David J. Conklin and Kevin L. Morgan, Was Desire of Ages Plagiarized? A Comparative Literary Analysis of the

Literary Borrowing by Authors in Their "Life of Christ" on Jesus' Trial Before Pilate (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Litho Tech, 2011); Douglass, 458-462; Jud Lake, Ellen White Under Fire: Identifying the Mistakes of Her Critics (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press®, 2010), 120-123. GOP 322.1

The most comprehensive summary of all the major issues relating to the plagiarism charge and Ellen White's use of sources has been the lecture notes of Roger W. Coon, associate director of the Ellen G. White Estate during the 1980s and 1990s. In his seminary classes and camp meeting presentations to Adventist audiences he addressed the terminological, biblical, legal, ethical, and practical issues related to Ellen White's use of sources, and demonstrated that Ellen White engaged in legitimate literary borrowing rather than plagiarism. 10Roger W. Coon, "Ellen G. White and the So-called 'Plagiarism' Charge: An Examination of Five Issues" (GSEM534 Lecture Outline, Andrews University, Apr. 30, 1999), 1-25. Coon's material continues to influence researchers today and is utilized in college and seminary classes whenever Ellen White's literary borrowing is discussed. 11Coon's material is used, for example, in the Ellen White classes of Denis Fortin, Jerry Moon (Andrews University Theological Seminary), and Jud Lake (Southern Adventist University). Fortin and Moon dedicated The Ellen G. White Encyclopedia to Coon: "Teacher, mentor, and friend whose career work on the life and ministry of Ellen White made a major contribution that many others have built upon" (The Ellen G. White Encyclopedia, 5). GOP 322.2

# Seven Facts About Ellen White's Use of Sources

The following seven facts represent the consensus of Adventist scholarship over many years of research. While the research will continue as new information emerges, these facts remain as foundational pillars on Ellen White's use of sources. *GOP 323.1* 

1. Ellen White read extensively from Protestant religious authors of her day and legitimately borrowed language from these uninspired sources. GOP 323.2

Although it is a long-established fact that Ellen White read widely, many Adventists have continued to believe that she received most of her insights from visions only. After all, she only had a third-grade formal education, rarely mentioned her reading, and credited God as the source of her messages. Additionally, there is a well-known picture of her gazing into the distance with pen in hand, as if she is writing down what God said to her. <sup>12This picture can be seen in "Photos," The Ellen G. White Encyclopedia, <sup>97</sup>. Through this picture, in which she is portrayed as a "producer rather than a consumer of books," some Adventists may have gained the impression that she read very little. <sup>13Ron Graybill, "Ellen White as a Reader and a Writer," Insight, May 19, 1981, 10. GOP 323.3</sup></sup>

At the time of her death, however, Ellen White's personal library contained about 1,300 volumes, composed mostly of authors who were outside of the Seventh-day Adventist community, <sup>14</sup>See Warren H. Johns, Tim Poirier, and Ron Graybill, A Bibliography of Ellen G. White's Private and Office Libraries, 3rd ed. (Silver Spring, Md.: Ellen G. White Estate, 1993); Warren H. Johns, "Library of Ellen White," in The Ellen G. White Encyclopedia, <sup>938</sup>. a library that "would give pause to more than one scholar of her time, and even today." <sup>15</sup>Juan Carlos Viera, The Voice of the Spirit: How God Has Led His People Through the Gift of Prophecy (Nampa Idaho: Pacific Press®, 1998), <sup>86</sup>. That she read and derived material from many of these volumes and others is evident in the fact that she used at least 50 source works in writing *The Desire of Ages*. <sup>16</sup>According to Marcella Anderson King, assistant to Fred Veltman in the Life of Christ Research Project, in Morgan, White Lie Soap, <sup>75</sup>. W. C. White explained that his mother "was a rapid reader" and admired the

language in which other writers had presented to their readers the scenes which God had presented to her in vision, and she found it both a pleasure, and a convenience and an economy of time to use their language fully or in part in presenting those things which she knew through revelation, and which she wished to pass on to her readers. <sup>17E. G. White, Selected Messages, 3:460, 462. GOP 323.4</sup>

According to the Ramik study mentioned above, Ellen White's use of the language from these "other writers" is considered "fair use," the legal doctrine that defines legitimate literary borrowing as adapting or improving material from common or independent sources to a new purpose that makes an original contribution. Plagiarism, "copying or imitating the language, ideas, and thoughts of another author, while representing them as one's original work," does not apply to how Ellen White used her sources. Rather, she borrowed material from the sources she read and adapted it in such a way that the end product was unique and original. <sup>18 Jerry Moon</sup>, "Who Owns the Truth? Another Look at the Plagiarism Issue," Ellen White and Current Issues Symposium, vol. 1 (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, 2005), 47, 48; Ramik, 14-16. GOP 323.5

When judged by the standards of the nineteenth century, Ellen White's use of sources was clearly within the ethical boundaries of literary borrowing. <sup>19</sup>Ramik, 14-27; Moon, "Who Owns the Truth?" 52-54. Adventist scholar of the twentieth century Raymond F. Cottrell examined 30 nineteenth-century commentaries on 1 Corinthians while editing the The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary and noted "the extent to which these nineteenth-century writers, many of them well known and respected, copied significant amounts of material from one another without once giving credit." He "concluded that nineteenth-century literary ethics, even among the best writers, approved of, or at least did not seriously question, generous literary borrowing without giving credit." Thus, in light of Ellen White's literary borrowing, "it is not fair to a nineteenth-century writer to judge [him or her] by our standards today. We must judge them by their standards and [the] accepted practice of their own days." 20Raymond, F. Cottrell, "The Literary Relationship Between The Desire of Ages, by Ellen G. White, and The Life of Christ, by William Hanna" (Washington, D.C.: Ellen G. White Estate, 1979), 6.GOP 324 1

Roger Coon believed Ellen White had a "philosophy of sacred composition" that nothing was totally original in the world and that Christ was the originating Creator and owner of all true ideas. Ellen White thus envisioned herself as the special agent, chosen by God, to convey these ancient truths in modern language. <sup>21Coon, 19, 34, 35.</sup> W. C. White and Dores E. Robinson explained this concept in their 1933 publication, *Brief Statements:GOP 324.2* 

In her early experience when she was sorely distressed over the difficulty of putting into human language the revelations of truths that had been imparted to her, she was reminded of the fact that all wisdom and knowledge comes from God and she was assured that God would bestow grace and guidance. She was told that in the reading of religious books and journals, she would find precious gems of truth expressed in acceptable language, and that she would be given help from heaven to recognize them and to separate them from the rubbish of error with which she would sometimes find them associated. <sup>22W. C. White and Robinson, 5.</sup> GOP 324.3

Coon also provided a summary of the practical reasons Ellen White borrowed material from others: (1) "to help her express well the ideas and truths revealed to her in vision"; (2) "to supplement details not given in vision"; (3) "to embellish the literary elements with beautiful gems of thought, for purpose of literary adornment"; (4) "to explain, adequately and meaningfully, Adventist doctrinal positions to her fellow church members"; and (5) "Ellen G. White's literary borrowing just may have been a subconscious exercise of a possible photographic memory." <sup>23Coon, 19, 20; see also Paul A. Gordon,</sup> "Why Did Ellen G. White Borrow?" (Ellen G. White Estate document). GOP

# 2. Ellen White was intentional in her use of sources. GOP 325.1

As noted above in the statement by W. C. White, Ellen White read from other authors and "found it both a pleasure, and a convenience and an economy of time to use" their language to help her express what she had seen in vision. She was thus conscious, deliberate, and alert in this "habit," as her son called it, "of using parts of sentences found in the writings of others and filling in a part

of her own composition." In her original handwritten manuscripts, for example, "quotation marks are used" and "in other cases they were not used." <sup>24E.</sup> G. White, Selected Messages, 3:460. As Fred Veltman concluded in his *Desire of Ages* source study, Ellen White used her sources "consciously and intentionally," and the "literary parallels were not the result of accident or 'photographic memory.' " <sup>25</sup>Veltman, "The Study of The Desire of Ages Sources," 769. Veltman differed with Coon on the issue of a "photographic memory." The fact that she did not give the authors she used credit relates to the legal issue noted above and to the ethical issue to be discussed below. *GOP* 325.2

Ellen White's intentionality in using sources can be described as theologically astute. The classic example of this is the way in which she used the theological writings of Calvin Stowe to express her understanding of inspiration. <sup>26See</sup> David Neff, "Ellen White's Theological and Literary Indebtedness to Calvin Stowe" (Washington, D.C.: EllenG. White Estate, 1979). In drawing words and phrases from Stowe's Origin and History of the Books of the Bible, Ellen White left out certain key phrases that differed from her understanding of inspiration. For example, Stowe had written: "It is not the words of the Bible that were inspired, it is not the thoughts of the Bible that were inspired; it is the men who wrote the Bible that were inspired." <sup>27Calvin E. Stowe</sup>, Origin and History of the Books of the Bible, Both the Canonical and the Apocryphal, Designed to Show What the Bible Is Not, What It Is, and How to Use It (Hartford: Hartford Pub. Co., 1867), 19. Ellen White wrote: "It is not the words of the Bible that are inspired, but the men that were inspired." Notice that she left out the phrase "not the thoughts of the Bible that were inspired." Contrary to Stowe, she believed that inspiration impacted the thoughts of the Bible writers. After careful analysis of Ellen White's use of Stowe, Denis Fortin concludes: "It seems obvious from this example that she had Stowe's text nearby when she wrote her own. Yet she did not mindlessly copy from Stowe but carefully weighed the concepts and understood the difference she wished to emphasize in her own understanding of the process of inspiration," 28Fortin, in The Ellen G. White Encyclopedia, 1034. GOP 325.3

A helpful way to explain Ellen White's intentional use of her sources is in the difference between reading-directed thinking and thinking-directed reading. <sup>29I</sup> am drawing from James W. Sire in his Habits of the

Mind: Intellectual Life as a Christian Calling (Downers Grove, III.: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 148-166, and have slightly modified his concept of these two types of reading. In reading-directed thinking the reading primarily directs the thinking, as when a student studies a textbook for an exam. The information in the book, its ideas and factual data are in control of the reader's mind. The student must know the contents of the book and accurately explain it on the exam. The experience is the same when anyone reads a book for information—the text of the book governs the thinking. Most Christians read the Bible this way since it is the Word of God. They want Scripture to control and direct their thinking. In thinking-directed reading, however, the reader's thoughts and understanding are more in control and thus the thinking directs the reading. The reader writes his or her own thoughts about the text in the margins instead of only marking sentences of importance. Ultimately, the reader's pre understanding and the book's contents unite in a creative synthesis. But all the while, the reader has come to the text with a concept already in mind and the text is a mere catalyst for his or her creative ideas. Thus, the reader's own ideas transcend the text, GOP 325.4

When Ellen White read her sources, she was not dependent on them for getting information and ideas as in reading-directed thinking. Rather, she came to her sources with a pre understanding as in thinking-directed reading. As W. C. White and D. E. Robinson explained, when she came to a book, she was not "one void of the thoughts she wished to present, and consulting books for the purpose of finding themes upon which she might write. On the contrary, abundant light had been given her and she was looking for helpful and concise forms of expression and gems of truth tersely expressed." 30W. C. White and Robinson, 11. Thus, her conscious mind was alert and in control as she interacted with her reading. With concepts and images already in mind, she read her sources and intentionally extracted useful literary expressions from them. At times the reading material sparked new avenues of thought and enabled her to express what she had seen in vision. In this manner Ellen White's inspired understanding directed her reading and use of sources, creating something unique and original in the end. GOP 326.1

As W. C. White recalled: GOP 326.2

It was remarkable that in her reading and scanning of books that her mind was directed to the most helpful books and to the most helpful passages contained in those books. Occasionally she would mention to father, and in my presence, her experience in being led to examine a book which she had never looked into before, and her experience in opening it to certain passages that helped her in describing that which she had seen and wished to present. <sup>31E. G.</sup> White, Selected Messages, 3:463. GOP 326.3

Such was the function of thinking-directed reading in Ellen White's experience. *GOP 326.4* 

3. The common knowledge Ellen White obtained from reading the Protestant religious authors was always subordinate to her inspired understanding. GOP 326.5

Common knowledge is that knowledge available to all people through life experience, reading, and research. Like their fellow human beings, the biblical prophets possessed this common knowledge and employed it in communicating what God had revealed to them. One example of this common knowledge is the biblical writers' use of many extrabiblical sources, fragments of which can be found throughout Scripture. The prophets were obviously familiar with the writings of their day through reading and used this material in communicating their inspired messages. *GOP* 326.6

For example, Moses used Near Eastern laws in the ancient world as a framework to communicate God's laws in such a way that people of that day could understand them; some of the psalms, proverbs, and parts of the Song of Songs used Egyptian literature to convey their inspired poetic messages; Luke used various historical records in writing his Gospel; and Paul cited pagan literature in getting his inspired points across to his readers. <sup>32For</sup> documentation on these examples, see Jiří Moskala, "Can a Biblical Inspired Writer Use Literary Sources?" Ellen G. White Issues Symposium, vol. 8 (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, 2012), 70-102; see also John H. Walton, ed., Zondervan Illustrated Bible Background Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), vols. 1-5, for numerous examples of literary borrowing in the Old Testament (for example, ibid., vol. 5,

466-469, on the use of Egyptian literature in Proverbs). In Revelation John used language from a depiction of the Hellenistic goddess Hekate to describe the glorified Christ, but modified the language to portray Christ as usurping the authority of Hekate and all other natural or supernatural authority. <sup>33See David E. Aune, Revelation 6-16, Word Biblical Commentary (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998), 406-409; and Ranko Stefanovic, Revelation of Jesus Christ: Commentary on the Book of Revelation, 2nd ed. (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University, 2009), 102. In each case, as shown in the last example, the biblical writer's inspired purpose transcended that of his source. <sup>34See</sup> Elias Brasil de Souza, "The Hebrew Prophets and the Literature of the Ancient Near East" (chapter 5). GOP 327.1</sup>

The use of this common knowledge in the Bible, then, was always subordinate to the revealed truth God gave to the prophets. Their inspired understanding always controlled the way in which they utilized the common knowledge available to them. "Divinely revealed knowledge is of higher authority than common knowledge, but does not replace it; rather, it complements it. God does not usually reveal to humans supernaturally what He has given them ability to learn for themselves." 35Jud Lake and Jerry Moon, "Current Science and Ellen White: Twelve Controversial Statements," in The Ellen G. White Encyclopedia, 216. Thus in the process of inspiration, the Holy Spirit allowed the prophets to communicate the inspired message through human language and common knowledge without violating the revealed truth. *GOP* 327.2

With regard to how Ellen White used common knowledge in her writing, *The Ellen G. White Encyclopedia* provides a helpful summary: GOP 327.3

Ellen White did not claim the authority of a canonical prophet, but she did claim to be inspired by the *same spirit* in the *same way* as were the canonical prophets (see GC viii, x-xii). Yet in writing out what she had seen in vision, she did not hesitate to use ordinary human sources for supplemental details, illustrations, and other kinds of support (see 3SM 445465). In personal letters she amplified revealed counsel with facts received from common sources (1SM 38, 39). In expounding Scripture she used Bible dictionaries, chronologies, and other resources to expand her

knowledge. In advocating health principles she utilized the writings of contemporary reformers and physicians (see, for example, HR, April 1871; HR, May 1871, HR, October 1871). In writing on historical subjects she consulted the histories, chronologies, and geographies available to her at the time, even sending assistants to search university libraries for needed information (6 Bio 308, 318, 319; 3SM 439, 440). Further, she was willing in later editions to revise historical details when other sources were shown to be more reliable than the ones she had used (3SM 445-465). Some alleged discrepancies she did not accept as discrepancies, but others she acknowledged and revised (see 6 Bio 303-306). Such was the use of *common knowledge* in her writings. <sup>36lbid. For extended discussion on the relationship of common knowledge and divine revelation, see ibid., 215-220. GOP 327.4</sup>

But like the Bible writers, the information Ellen White gained from uninspired common sources—reading, travel, life experiences, associations, and research—was always subordinate to the information she received by direct revelation. When reading from secondary sources in preparation for writing, her inspired understanding was controlling the process. She intentionally interacted with the material and modified it to fit this understanding. which was often quite different from that of the author from whom she borrowed. In some cases, according to W. C. White, she added to the material from which she read: "Many times in the reading of Hanna, Farrar, or Fleetwood, she would run on to a description of a scene which had been vividly presented to her, but forgotten, and which she was able to describe more in detail than that which she had read " 37E. G. White, Selected Messages, 3:460. Such was the manner in which common knowledge operated in an inspired person. GOP 328.1

4. Ellen White's use of language from uninspired authors to express her inspired thoughts was congruent with her understanding of how inspiration worked. GOP 328.2

Ellen White possessed an understanding of inspiration that was more holistic than verbal. When she wrote in her most significant theological statement on inspiration that "the writers of the Bible were God's penmen, not His pen," a statement that she borrowed and modified from Calvin Stowe. 38Stowe, 18; see Neff, 9, for comparison and analysis. The phrase in Stowe, "God's penman, not God's pens," is actually a citation he attributes to "Reply to Essays and Reviews." Evidently the phrase was circulating, for it is also found in Augustus H. Strong, Systematic Theology: A Compendium Designed for the Use of Theological Students (Rochester, N.Y.: Press of E. R. Andrews, 1886), 100, in which he describes the mechanical dictation theory as when the biblical writers became "pens, not penman, of God." she placed the emphasis on the whole person ("penmen") rather than on the words ("pen"). Thus, "it is not the words of the Bible that are inspired, but the men that were inspired." The emphasis is on the whole person, "who, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, is imbued with thoughts." But, she adds, the "words receive the impress of the individual mind." That is, the "words" of the inspired person reflect his or her personality, education, and life experience. In this context, "the divine mind is diffused." <sup>39The entire statement can</sup> be found in E. G. White, Selected Messages, 1:21. For an extended discussion on Ellen White's understanding of revelation-inspiration, see Frank M. Hasel, "Revelation and Inspiration," in The Ellen G. White Encyclopedia, 1087-1101. GOP 328.3

The word "diffused" meant that the Holy Spirit was "dispersed" and spread throughout the human mind. 4040. See "diffused" in Webster's 1828 dictionary in the Ellen G. White Writings CD Rom: Comprehensive Research Edition (Silver Spring, Md.: Ellen G. White Estate, 2008) But not in a way that violated the human personality. Rather, "the divine mind and will is combined with the human mind and will" in such a way that "the utterances of the man are the word of God." 41E. G. White, Selected Messages, 1:21. This understanding of inspiration focuses on the total personality of the prophets, rather than just their words or thoughts. Inspiration did reach the words of the biblical writers, but not in the same sense as taught in the mechanical, dictation view of inspiration. 42See Lake, Ellen White Under Fire, 109-120, for discussion on the dictation model of inspiration and its influence in the Adventist Church. God met the biblical writers where they were at in their life experience, and the whole person was affected, which, except for the times God spoke directly, eliminated any rigid word control by the Holy Spirit in the process of inspiration. 43See Norman Gully, Systematic Theology: Prolegomena (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 2003), 315, 316,

325, for a helpful explanation on how inspiration worked on the mind of the prophet. The end product of this unique combination of the human and the divine was "the word of God." *GOP 329.1* 

Described as "symphonic" 44See Alberto Timm, "Understanding Inspiration: The Symphonic and Wholistic Nature of Scripture," Ministry, August 1999, 12-15; idem, "Divine Accommodation and Cultural Conditioning of the Inspired Writings," Journal of the Adventist Theological Society 19, nos. 1-2 (2008): 161-174. For a discussion on the history of Adventist views on inspiration, see idem, "A History of Seventh-day Adventist Views on Biblical and Prophetic Inspiration (1844-2000)," Journal of the Adventist Theological Society 10, nos. 1-2 (1999): 486-542. "whole-person" 45See Lake, Ellen White Under Fire, 115-120. and inspiration, this understanding embraces the multifaceted nature of inspired writing found in the Bible, which involved different modes or ways of communicating God's revealed truth. These modes are found throughout Scripture, such as the theophanic mode (Ex. 3:1-5), the prophetic mode (Rev. 1:1-3), the verbal mode (Ex. 31:18), the historical/research mode (Luke 1:1-3), the wisdom mode (Eccl. 1:1, 12-14; 12:9-11), the poetic mode (Psalms); and the epistolary mode (New Testament epistles). 46See ibid., 119. Some of these different modes of the inspiration process are found in Ellen White's writings. For example, when she wrote about heavenly scenes she had seen in vision, the theophanic mode was at work. 47See Ellen G. White, Spiritual Gifts (Battle Creek, Mich.: James White, 1860), 2:292, 293. some rare instances, she used the verbal mode when quoting a heavenly messenger or angel. 48See, for example, Ellen G. White, Gospel Workers (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald®, 1915), 94, 95; and idem, Testimonies for the Church (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press®, 1948), 1:132.<sub>GOP</sub> 329.2

When Ellen White extracted useful information from a source she was reading and modified it to fit her inspired understanding, she was acting in accord with the historical/research mode of inspiration. <sup>49</sup>See George E. Rice, Luke, a Plagiarist? (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press®, 1983); and Viera, 61-64. As we noted earlier, she read widely and "admired the language in which other writers had presented to their readers the scenes which God had presented to her in vision." She found it "an economy of time to use their

language fully or in part in presenting those things which she knew through revelation, and which she wished to pass on to her readers." <sup>50E.</sup> G. White, Selected Messages, 3:460. Thus, knowing her limitations as a writer and feeling the weight of profound messages, Ellen White read thousands of pages to enrich how she expressed the divine concepts in her mind. To her, this was not a violation of the inspiration process. Whole-person inspiration, as she understood it, allowed the prophets "to use the expressions, literary figures, or phrases they have learned or read, in order to communicate the divine message that they have received." <sup>51Viera, 87</sup>·GOP 329.3

5. Ellen White was honest in communicating her use of sources to her reading audience. *GOP 330.1* 

Closely associated with her use of sources is the ethical issue of whether or not Ellen White attempted to hide or deny her literary borrowing. Robert W. Olson, former director of the White Estate, published an article in *Ministry*, February 1991, that examined "every currently known denial of the use of sources made by Ellen White herself," and showed that when read in context, most of the denials presented no problem. <sup>52</sup>Robert W. Olsen, "Ellen White's Denials," Ministry, February 1991, 15-18; Morgan, White Lie Soap, also deals with the denials: <sup>113-128</sup>. Warren H. Johns also addressed this issue in Ministry, June 1982, by presenting five facts that there was "no attempt on the part of Ellen White to deceive or to cover up" her use of sources. 53 A review of these facts is helpful. *GOP 330.2* 

Fact 1 was the openness of W. C. White in explaining how God guided his mother in her reading of sources. <sup>53Warren</sup> H. Johns, "Literary Thief or God's Messenger," Ministry, June 1982, 14. Because she had related to him how the Lord guided her to the right sources that helped her in writing, W. C. White openly shared this insight in educating others on how she worked, as seen in statements already cited in this chapter. <sup>54See</sup> E. G. White, Selected Messages, book 3, Appendix C, for the letters of W. C. White to L. E. Froom on the subject of Ellen White's reading and literary borrowing: <sup>459-465</sup>. Thus, Johns asserted: "If there was an intent to deceive, why would God give His approval to her use of sources as well as provide specific instruction that she

was to gather gems of truth from uninspired writers?" <sup>55Johns,</sup> "Literary Thief or God's Messenger," 14. GOP 330.3

Fact 2: Ellen White on various occasions did her research in other sources "in full view of others." She was even granted a writing room on the second floor of the brick Review and Herald, which contained a library from which she "made selection of books which she considered profitable to read." <sup>56E. G. White, Selected Messages, 3:463.</sup> If Ellen White was attempting to hide what she was doing, surely she would *never* have done her reading and research at a location subject to the peering eyes of fellow Adventists." <sup>57Ibid.</sup> *GOP 330.4* 

Fact 3 was the way in which Ellen White freely lent her books to others, "books that presumably she would need, sooner or later, in her research." "It would seem inexplicable," Johns reasoned, "for her to do so if she were attempting to conceal the fact of her borrowing from these very sources." <sup>58lbid.</sup> GOP 330.5

Fact 4: "Ellen White made no attempt to conceal from her helpers the fact that she relied upon available books for her research and writing." While in Europe, for example, she wrote to her family in Battle Creek and requested they send her some histories of the Bible to use in her writing. <sup>59lbid.</sup> GOP 331.1

Fact 5: "Ellen White recommended to the general Seventh-day Adventist Church membership the very books from which she was drawing selected material in writing her books and testimonies." 60lbid. For example, in The Great Controversy she borrowed material from Merle D'Aubigne's History of the Reformation, J. A. Wylie's History of the Waldenses, and from Adventist authors, such as J. N. Andrews' History of the Sabbath, Uriah Smith's The Sanctuary and Its Cleansing, and her husband, James White's Life of William Miller. These works were very familiar to Adventist Interestingly, audiences. before she published The Controversy, she recommended D'Aubigne's books as a holiday gift for loved ones in the Review and Herald. 61 Ellen G. White, "Holiday Gifts," Review and Herald, Dec. 26, 1882, 789; see Fortin, in The Ellen G. White Encyclopedia, 1030. GOP 331.2

W. J. Conybeare and J. S. Howson's *The Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, which she borrowed from in writing her *Sketches From the Life of Paul*, was advertised in the *Signs of the Times*, February 22, 1883, with the following endorsement from Ellen White: "*The Life of St. Paul*, by Conybeare and Howson, I regard as a book of great merit, and one of rare usefulness to the earnest student of the New Testament history." <sup>62</sup>Ellen G. White, "A Valuable Book," Signs of the Times, Feb. 22, 1883, 96. Denis Fortin correctly notes "the fact that her own book on the life of Paul was about to be released in June of that year is strong evidence that Ellen White made no attempt to hide from church members the obvious parallels between her work and that of Conybeare and Howson." <sup>63</sup>Fortin, in The Ellen G. White Encyclopedia, 1031. GOP 331.3

6. The amount of confirmed literary borrowing in Ellen White's writings is a small percentage of her entire literary corpus. *GOP* 331.4

Researchers have carefully studied the ways in which Ellen White used her sources, particularly in the *Life of Christ Research Project* According to Veltman, the research tool applied in the study was source analysis with the independent sentence as the unit of comparison between the major text and source texts with an earlier date. The range used was from a verbatim (sentences that duplicate exactly at least part of a sentence in a source) to loose paraphrase (sentences that echo the thought in a source) to independence (no parallel sentences with a source). <sup>641</sup> am summarizing Morgan, White Lie Soap, 61ff., where a more detailed explanation based on the original Veltman study can be found. GOP 331 5

"In respect to the degree of literary dependency" in *The Desire of Ages*, the study concluded: *GOP 331.6* 

No instances of strict verbatim were found. Of the 2,624 sentence units of the *Desire of Ages* text studied, 20 (1.1 percent) were labeled as verbatim, and 183 (6.0 percent) were classified as strict paraphrase. A total of 823 of the 2,624 sentence units of the *Desire of Ages* text (31 percent) clearly exhibited some degree of dependency consisting of one parallel word or more. When the

1,612 independent sentences were factored in, the average level of dependency was 3.3, or just a little higher dependency than loose paraphrase. <sup>65</sup>Veltman, "Study of The Desire of Ages Sources," 769; see also Morgan, 61, 62, for further explanation. *GOP 331.7* 

Of the borrowed material in Ellen White's writings, evidence shows that she followed at times the storyline of other sources to flesh out the details of the "main outlines" that had been "made very clear and plain to her" in vision. 66E. G. White, Selected Messages, 3:462. For example, when writing on the life of Christ, she derived her storyline and some historical details from William Hanna's Life of Christ and Frederick Farrar's Life of Christ, <sup>67See</sup> Morgan, White Lie Soap, 91-94, for discussion and examples. and used Merle D'Aubigne's History of the Reformation and J. A. Wylie's History of the Waldenses to provide structure for her narrative in The Great Controversy. "The revelations which she had received enabled her to grip subjects regarding which she read in a vigorous way," wrote W. C. White. "This enabled her to select and appropriate that which was true and to discard that which was erroneous or doubtful." 68E. G. White, Selected Messages, 3:462. As such, the overall content represented her own unique understanding. GOP 332.1

Significantly, a study by Tim Poirier, vice director and archivist of the White Estate, demonstrates that at present the literary borrowing in Ellen White's writings overall is a very small percentage. For years he has kept track of all literary parallels that critics and supporters have located or reported, and marked them in a set of volumes in his office (*excluding The Desire of Ages* because of the Veltman project). The study concludes that the total number of lines with literary parallels "presently known" and "evidenced by proper documentation" in Ellen White's writings stand at less than 4 percent—quite different from the inflated percentages of the critics. <sup>69Tim Poirier</sup>, "Ellen White's Literary Sources: How Much Literary Borrowing Is There?" summarized at www .whiteestate.org/issues/parallel.html, and cited in Morgan, White Lie Soap, 63, 64. It should be noted that this is an ongoing study and that any future evidence of literary borrowing will be included. *GOP 332.2* 

7. Although several of Ellen White's most beautifully expressed

thoughts or literary gems were derived from other authors, she improved them and made them her own. GOP 332.3

A distinguishing feature in Ellen White's use of sources is the literary gems in the writings of others that she borrowed and modified to suit her own personal end. "Mrs. White read such books as she considered would be helpful to her in acquiring skill in presenting in clear, forceful language the instruction she had to give," according to W. C. White and D. E. Robinson. She had been given "abundant light" and "was looking for helpful and concise forms of expression and for gems of truth tersely expressed. This she did with the divine assurance that she would be guided in distinguishing the true from the false." <sup>70W. C. White and Robinson, 11.</sup> GOP 332.4

When she encountered these "literary gems tersely expressed" in the writings of other writers, Ellen White remembered them and probably jotted some down for later use, either in paraphrase or verbatim form. Like natural gems that needed "to be cut, polished, and set for their beauty to be appreciated," explains Kevin Morgan, "these thought gems had to be corrected, reworked, and reset before she could use them." <sup>71Morgan</sup>, White Lie Soap, <sup>94</sup>. And when she published these literary gems, they revealed her own modified form of the thought that had actually become her own. *GOP* 332.5

### Exhibits of How Ellen White Used Her Sources

The following five exhibits of literary borrowing are some of the more familiar statements to readers of Ellen White and contain some of her most memorable literary gems. The statements move from loose paraphrase to a more verbatim form and are organized under the headings of prayer, providence, reflection on the life of Christ, men of integrity, and salvation. The sources Ellen White used are on the left and her modified form of the thought on the right. GOP 333.1

### Prayer

Edward Bickeresteth, A Ellen White, Steps to Christ (1891): Treatise on Prayer (1834):

"It is a key to open the "Prayer is the key in the hand of faith to storehouse of all God's unlock heaven's storehouse, where are Treasury to us. . . . So by treasured the boundless resources of prayer we obtain all the blessings which we require" Omnipotence" (94, 95). \*For reference and analysis, see King and Morgan, More Than Words, 127, 183.

#### **Providence**

E. W. Thayer, Sketches From the Ellen White, The Desire of Ages Life of Jesus, Historical and (1898):

"It was the fullness of time; the word "But like the stars in the vast circuit of was fully ripe for the event. The their appointed path, God's purposes clock of destiny had struck the hour; know no haste and no delay" (32). <sup>†For</sup> God is in no haste about his special reference and analysis, see Morgan, White Lie operations" (22). Soap, 71, 169.

#### Reflection on the Life of Christ

Daniel March, Walks and Homes of Ellen White, The Desire of Ages Jesus (1866): (1898):

"It would be well for us to spend a "Nevertheless, it will do us all good, thoughtful hour each frequently and solemnly to review contemplation of the life of Christ. We the closing scenes in the Saviour's should take it point by point, and let earthly life. Amid all the material and the imagination grasp each scene, worldly passions, by which we are especially the closing ones. As we beset and tempted, we shall learn thus dwell upon His great sacrifice for many salutary lessons, by going us, our confidence in Him will be back in memory, and spending a more constant, our love will be thoughtful hour, in the endeavor to quickened, and we shall be more strengthen our faith and quicken our deeply imbued with His spirit. If we love at the foot of the cross. What would be saved at last, we must learn then are the lessons which the divine the lesson of penitence Passion, the infinite sacrifice, the humiliation at the foot of the cross" true and redemptive Cross of Christ (83), ‡For reference and analysis, see ibid., is fitted to teach?" (313, 314). 95. 96. 166.

# Men of Integrity

"Driftings," Buffalo Daily Courier, June Ellen White, Education (1903): 16, 1866:

"The great want of this age is men. Men "The greatest want of the world is who are not for sale. Men who are the want of men- men who will to not be bought or sold, men who in from center circumference, true to the heart's core, their inmost souls are true and and honest, men who do not fear to call Men who fear the Lord covetousness. Men who will condemn sin by its right name, men whose wrong in friend or foe, in themselves as conscience is as true to duty as well as in others. Men who consciences the needle to the pole, men who are steady as the needle to the pole will stand for the right though the Men who will stand for the right if the heavens fall" (57). §For reference and heavens totter and the earth reels" (2). analysis, see ibid., 97, 98.

#### Salvation

Robert Boyd, The World's Hope; Ellen White, The Desire of Ages (1898): or the Rock of Ages (1873):

and took our sins, that we might had no share" (381, 382).

"He was treated as we deserved "Christ was treated as we deserve, that in order that we might be treated we might be treated as He deserves. He as he deserved. He came to earth was condemned for our sins, in which He had no share, that we might be take his righteousness and go to justified by His righteousness, in which heaven. He was condemned for we had no share. He suffered the death our sins, in which he had no which was ours, that we might receive share, that we might be justified the life which was His. With His stripes by his righteousness, in which we we are healed' " (25). \*\*For reference and analysis, see ibid., 103, 162.

Although the original sources are clearly recognizable in Ellen White's versions, she took the literary gem and made it her own, even in the latter two examples, where a more verbatim form of borrowing is shown. She changed words and added others, modified and reworked the thought, and ultimately improved, enhanced, and made more memorable the gem that had become herown. "The truth," according to researchers E. Marcella Anderson King and Kevin Morgan, is that, whether Ellen White used Biblical descriptions, assimilated language, adapted gems of thought, or words and phrases absorbed from her use of sources as storyline guides, one thing is certain—her finished product is clearly her own, and she has done her readers a great service in identifying, improving, and making more memorable some of the most effective language available for telling the "story of Jesus' love." 72King and Morgan, More Than Words, 129; for a study of Ellen White's style of writing, see Gladys King-Taylor, Literary Beauty of Ellen G. White's Writings (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press®, 1953); King-Taylor does not take into account Ellen White's literary borrowing, but does show that Ellen White developed her own unique and effective style of writing. GOP 334 1

## Conclusion

In conclusion, while the research on Ellen White's literary borrowing will continue, several insights have emerged out of the controversy surrounding this issue. First, the open acknowledgment and discussion about her use of sources has enhanced the church's appreciation for how she labored in conveying her inspired message. Second, open discussion on how Ellen White wrote her books has helped many in the church better understand the nature of biblical inspiration and how it operated in her experience. Consequently, the incorrect view of verbal dictation has been brought to the forefront of discussion and corrected with the whole-person view found in Scripture. *GOP 335.1* 

Third, research in Ellen White's use of sources has opened up the world of nineteenth-century thought on biblical themes. An understanding of the particular theological and historical sources Ellen White used tells us a lot about her as a theological thinker as well as the nature of Christian thought during the nineteenth century. She used the best sources available during her lifetime and used them with discernment. I often tell the students in my "Life and Teaching of Jesus" class, for example, that when they read their textbook, *The Desire of Ages*, they will get a feel of the best nineteenth-century thought on the life of Christ, but understood through Ellen White's unique theological worldview of the great controversy. *GOP 335.2* 

Finally, the research to date has confirmed a consistent pattern in Ellen White's use of sources. Although she borrowed material from other writings in composing her books and articles, the way in which she used this material does not fit the charges of mindless copying and plagiarism. After his massive eight-year study, Fred Veltman's significant conclusion demonstrated this pattern: "The research clearly shows that the sources were her slaves, never her master. She readily recognized what expressions in her sources would enhance her writing and serve her purposes. Ellen White, with the aid of her literary assistants, built out of the common quarry of stones not a replica of another's work but rather a customized literary composition that reflected the particular faith and Christian hope she felt called to share with her fellow Adventists and the

Christian community at large." <sup>73Veltman, "The Study of The Desire of Ages Sources," 770.</sup> Put another way, the uninspiredsources Ellen White used served the purpose of enabling her to forcefully articulate the unique metanarrative in her inspired understanding—the ultimate triumph of the love of God through Jesus Christ in the great controversy between Christ and Satan. <sup>74See Lake, Ellen White Under Fire, chapters 11-12, for discussion of the big picture in Ellen White's writings; andDouglass, <sup>256-263.</sup> This grand organizing theme is evidence of her originality and independence as an author and constitutes her unique contribution to Christian thought. *GOP 335.3*</sup>

Chapter 18 - Ellen G. White and Adventist Mission<sup>11</sup> am indebted to Benjamin Baker for assistance in researching this paper, to Evelyn Torres for checking references, and to Bruce Anderson for his comments on an earlier version presented on July 18, 2015, at the Ellen White Centennial Legacy Conference at Pacific Union College.

## David J. B. Trim

In Lewis Carroll's Alice in Wonderland, published two years after the Seventh-day Adventist Church was founded, the King of Hearts famously advises the White Rabbit: "Begin at the beginning and go on till you come to the end: then stop." In history, however, it sometimes is helpful to begin, not at the beginning, but at the end. On July 24, 1915, Arthur G. Daniells addressed 4.000 mourners attending the funeral service of Ellen G. White in Battle Creek's Dime Tabernacle 2Francis M. Wilcox, "The Final Funeral Services of Mrs. Ellen G. White," Review and Herald [hereafter RH], Aug. 5,1915, 3. After her death on July 16, there had been two previous funeral services: at Elmshaven on July 18, attended by "about four hundred" people, and then at Oakland, on July 19, "with fully one thousand persons in attendance" (Ibid.). Daniells had known and worked with White for 25 years; he was then in his fourteenth year as General Conference president, and he spoke for a movement that was finally becoming truly a global one. 3A. G. Daniells, "Life Sketch of Sister E. G. White," RH, Aug. 5, 1915, 4-8 In his life sketch he emphasized Ellen White's commitment to worldwide mission: GOP 337.1

In the writings of Mrs. White prominence is given to the responsibilities of the church in both home and foreign mission service. Every member of the body is admonished to be a light in the world, a blessing to those with whom he may associate. All must live the unselfish life of the Master for others. And the church in Christian lands must put forth their highest endeavors to evangelize those who are groping in the darkness and superstition of heathen lands. *GOP* 337.2

Go to all the world, give to all the world, work for all the world, is the

exhortation running through all the writings of Mrs. White. 4lbid., 8. GOP 337.3

It is striking that, with the advantage of hindsight, looking back over Ellen White's 70 years of prophetic ministry, Daniells concluded that the preeminent theme in her writings was mission in general, and foreign mission above all. *GOP 337.4* 

In this essay I argue that Daniells was accurate in his assessment of his prophetic mentor: that mission was Ellen White's top priority: but that in addition, while she was always committed to and stressed "the responsibilities of the church in . . . home . . . mission service," she especially emphasized (and, as I will argue, in later life increasingly highlighted) the responsibility of the church in its homelands for outreach abroad. The necessity of proclaiming "good news" and the prophetic truths of Revelation everywhere, to every people (and particularly those who have not even heard the gospel), in "all the world," indeed runs "through all the writings of Mrs. White." Now, the Spirit of Prophecy corpus is so broad and diverse, and Ellen G. White expressed enthusiasm about so many other subjects, that assigning primacy to foreign mission may seem tendentious. Unquestionably, colleagues from the Education, Publishing Ministries, and Health Ministries departments could quote numerous statements that show her affinity and passion for their areas of ministry. I suggest, though, that she regarded all as methodologies—merely means to an end. This paper will underscore that the most important theme in Ellen White's writings is that all church members should widely share the truly good news that "the Son of God . . . ranked himself among the sons of men," taking "man's nature that He might reach man's wants," revealing "love, mercy and compassion . . . in every act of His life," making "the height and depth of the love of God . . . manifest." 5Ellen G. White, Redemption: or The Temptation of Christ in the Wilderness (Battle Creek, Mich.: Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, 1877), 43, reprinted in Selected Messages (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald®, 1958, 1980), 1:278; Steps to Christ (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press®, 1956), 3, 5. In Fllen White's thinking, sermons, schools, literature, and temperate and healthy living are all just different ways to lift up before the world our Lord, Savior, Redeemer, and great High Priest. GOP 337.5

Moreover, to do this is the mission of the church and of all church members, regardless of their nation or location. Daniells summarized Ellen White's view: "Every member of the body is . . . to be a light in the world . . . . *All* must live the unselfish life of the Master for others." *GOP 338.1* 

Yet the prophet's general passion for mission had a particular application. As Daniells put it, she believed that "the church in Christian lands must put forth [its] highest endeavors to evangelize those who are groping in the darkness and superstition of heathen lands." And this was not just a theoretical concern, since, as Daniells observed later in his life sketch: GOP 338.2

For fully seventy years she gave her life in active service to the cause of God in behalf of sinful, suffering, sorrowing humanity. After traveling extensively through the United States from 1846 to 1885, she visited Europe, where she devoted two years to the work there, which was then in a formative period. In 1891 she went to Australia, where she remained nine years, traveling about the colonies, and devoting all her energies to the upbuilding of the work. 6Daniells, 8. GOP 338.3

Hence Daniells' conclusion, already noted: "Go to all the world, give to all the world, work for all the world, is the exhortation running through all the writings of Mrs. White." GOP 338.4

Thus, while this essay is on Ellen White and Adventist mission, it largely analyzes White's thinking and writing on foreign mission. I do briefly consider domestic mission because, as we will see, one of White's principles is that "home and foreign mission service," as Daniells put it, are integrally interrelated. But this is essentially a study of Ellen White's principles for foreign mission. It shows that White played an important part in persuading Seventh-day Adventists to accept responsibility for evangelizing beyond North America; and it argues that by the end of her life and ministry she increasingly prioritized mission in countries and regions in which Christianity was a minority faith or nonexistent. The story of Ellen White and Adventist mission is partly one of how, under the guidance of God, she (and we) gradually came to see the vital importance of outreach outside North America, and especially

among what today we would call unreached people groups; this was a point she recognized and propounded before any other church leader. GOP 338.5

This is the first substantial analysis of Ellen White's thinking about mission for a generation. Thirty years ago B0rge Schantz's systematic study of Adventist mission thought included a valuable and extensive analysis of "the missionary theories of E. G. White." 7Børge Schantz, "The Development of Seventh-day Adventist Missionary Thought: A Contemporary Appraisal" (Ph.D. diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 1983), 470-714. But there is no summative analysis of her principles of mission. Two other brief considerations are limited chronologically and geographically. In his influential analysis of Adventist theology of mission up to 1874, Gerard Damsteegt naturally often touches on Ellen White's early writings on the subject, but does not attempt a synthesis, and offers a summary on only one subject (the "shut door"), while Rex Riches provides a brief sketch of White's thought about mission in Europe, especially Britain. 8P. Gerard Damsteegt, Foundations of the Seventh-day Adventist Message and Mission (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), chaps. 4, 5, especially 149-154; Rex Riches, Establishing the British Mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church 1863-1887 (Greensboro, N.C.: privately printed, 2004), 271-275. GOP 339 1

Ellen White wrote many thousands of words about foreign mission work, and it is quite an undertaking to summarize Ellen White's thought on any subject to which she devoted more than passing thought. Based both on what God showed her in visions and on her practical experience as an evangelistic worker, and as a cross-cultural missionary, White kept returning to certain themes when she wrote on mission, identifying certain methodologies or aspects of mission that were important. I have endeavored here to distill from White's corpus some of her key principles for foreign mission work, having first, however, studied her thought on mission as a whole. In addition to an early phase of writings on foreign mission, which helped to move the Seventh-day Adventist Church away from an Americentric focus toward a global vision, thereafter I identify in her thought six key missional principles. *GOP* 339.2

1. Foreign mission should be led by experienced people; those who have never been to the mission field should not dictate how the

- 2. Young people have a great role to play and should be entrusted with responsibilities; but they also need appropriate training. GOP 339.4
- 3. Financial resources are essential, but they should be distributed to ensure that new territories are entered, rather than concentrated on building up existing strongholds. *GOP 340.1*
- 4. Adventist mission must go to all the world, as foretold in Scripture, since otherwise souls may be damned, and Christ's return delayed. *GOP 340.2*
- 5. Adventist mission must be Christ-centered, and lovingly communicated by missionaries who have been revived by a relationship with Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit. GOP 340.3
- 6. Finally, as well as being shared with all national, ethnic, and linguistic people groups, the distinctive Adventist message must also reach all religious groups. Seventh-day Adventism is not merely a reform movement within Protestant Christianity—all must hear the "everlasting gospel" and learn more about "the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus" (*Rev. 14:6*, *12*). *GOP 340.4*

It should be noted that some of Ellen White's statements, if considered in isolation, could seem to be in conflict with each other, because they appear each to be prioritizing a certain methodology. But White was not guilty of inconsistency; instead, she promoted a holistic view of mission, as something requiring a multifaceted approach. In consequence, she at various times and in various circumstances stressed a particular facet or strand of mission, because she felt it was in danger of being lost sight of. But that did not mean she believed that only one strand was to be used, or that one was more important than the other. If there is one aspect that could be singled out in her thought, it is the complementarity and comprehensiveness of the mission enterprise. Fortunately, there are several places where she draws the strands together and we can see how wide-ranging her approach was to foreign mission, incorporating medical, educational, and publishing institutions, and

all kinds of personal and evangelistic ministry. GOP 340.5

### From America to "All Parts of the World"

In 1863 the founders of the General Conference identified the mission of Seventh-day Adventists as "the great work of disseminating light upon the commandments of God, the faith of Jesus, and the truths connected with the third angel's message." 9"Report of General Conference," RH, May 26, 1863, 205 Yet most Seventhday Adventists saw this "great work" as being extremely geographically limited for more than a decade after the founding. until indeed three decades had passed after the Great Disappointment. Only in 1874 did the remnant church send its first missionary abroad. Up to that point, most Adventists had not thought about mission—they had considered it and rejected it as unnecessary. In 1859 Uriah Smith, the editor of the Review and Herald, had noted in its pages that the third angel's message was not "at present being proclaimed in any country besides our own" and he had then argued that "this might not perhaps be necessary" on the ingenious grounds that "our own land is composed of people from almost every nation," so that the apocalyptic prophecies of proclamation to "many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings" could be fulfilled within the confines of North America. In 1867 Smith returned to this theme, observing with satisfaction: "In what other land could the proclamation of the truth reach so many 'peoples, nations and tongues'? People from every civilized part of the globe are here to be found." 10Editorial in RH, Feb. 3, 1859, 87; Jan. 1, 1867, 48.<sub>GOP</sub> 340.6

However, a small number did hold a wider view of mission, even at that early stage. James White, for instance, struggled to broaden church members' horizons, but ruefully observed in 1870 that among "those who are ready . . . to help the cause in our own land . . . to help the cause in Europe does not look so clear." <sup>11James</sup> White, "Cause in Switzerland," RH, Jan. 11, 1870, 21. See D.J.B. Trim, "Illuminating the Whole Earth': Adventism and Foreign Mission in the Battle Creek Years," in Lessons From Battle Creek, ed. Alberto Timm (forthcoming). GOP 341.1

Finally, in October 1874 [September 15], J. N. Andrews sailed for Europe, the first Seventh-day Adventist overseas missionary. A few

weeks later Stephen Haskell wrote in the Review and Herald: "It once required a great stretch of faith to believe this work would find its way to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people, and lead thousands of persons of different nationalities to embrace the Sabbath of the Lord and kindred truths." While Haskell acknowledged that church leaders' initial "ideas of this work were altogether too small at first," they were, he wrote, now making "broader and more extensive plans." 12S. N. Haskell, "To Nations, Tongues, and People," RH, Nov. 10, 1874, 157. GOP 341 2

What had changed the minds of church leaders and church members? It was partly the trenchant advocacy of James White, and partly the pleas for help from small congregations of Seventh-day Adventists in Europe, arising from Adventist literature sent from America and from the efforts of unofficial missionaries. But it was also partly the fruit of Ellen White's prophetic ministry. GOP 341.3

One of her earliest—and most important—divine revelations had weighty implications for foreign missions. At a meeting in Boston on November 18, 1848, Ellen received a vision. On waking, she instructed her husband, James: "You must begin to print a little paper and send it out to the people. Let it be small at first; but as the people read, they will send you means with which to print, and it will be a success from the first." This vision is famous among Seventh-day Adventists as the origin of our publishing work. But there was an important addendum to the vision: "From this small beginning it was shown to me to be like streams of light that went clear round the world." <sup>13Ellen G. White</sup> [and C. C. Crisler], Life Sketches of Ellen G. White (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press®, 1915), <sup>125.</sup> Implicit in this revelation, then, was that the seventh-day Sabbathkeepers had a global future. *GOP 341.4* 

Having laid down this first marker, so to speak, for the next 20 years internal matters absorbed Ellen White's attention and her visions largely dealt with doctrinal and ecclesiological matters. But after the Sabbatarians organized as Seventh-day Adventists, she started to receive divine promptings highlighting the need for the third angel's message to be disseminated beyond the shores of North America. At first, consonant with the 1848 vision, Ellen White emphasized the potential role of publishing in foreign mission. In December 1871 a

testimony on missionary work admonished: "There has been but little of the missionary spirit among Sabbathkeeping Adventists." There was work for young people, both male and female, she declared: "Young men should be qualifying themselves by becoming familiar with other languages, that God may use them as mediums to communicate His saving truth to those of other nations." Similarly, "young women" should "devote themselves to God," fitting "themselves for usefulness by studying and becoming familiar with other languages," so that they "could devote themselves to the work of translating." White concluded: "Our publications should be printed in other languages, that foreign nations may be reached." 14Ellen G. White, Testimonies for the Church (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press®, 1948), 3:202, 204. GOP 341 5

In 1873 she was shown very clearly that Adventist publications should be printed in various languages and sent overseas. She expressed this strongly in an article published in January 1874, in which she also adumbrated a position she would later frequently reiterate, namely, that the cost of missions is to be no object. But first she expressed, in very moving terms, the potential value of Adventist literature. "I have been shown," she wrote, "that our publications should be printed in different languages and sent to every civilized country, at any cost" ("uncivilized" countries were left unaddressed, but this would change, later in her ministry). GOP 342.1

I have been shown that the publications already have been doing a work upon some minds in other countries . . . . I was shown men and women studying with intense interest . . . tracts upon present truth. They would read the evidences so wonderful and new to them and would open their Bibles with a deep and new interest, as subjects of truth that had been dark to them were made plain. . . . As they searched the Scriptures . . . angels were hovering over them and impressing their minds with the truths contained in the publications they had been reading. I saw them holding . . . tracts in one hand, and the Bible in the other, while their cheeks were wet with tears, and bowing before God in earnest, humble prayer, to be guided into all truth—the very thing he was doing for them before they called upon him. And when the truth was received in their hearts, and they saw the harmonious chain of truth, the Bible was to

them a new book; they hugged it to their hearts with grateful joy, while their countenances were all aglow with happiness and holy joy. These were not satisfied with merely enjoying the light themselves, and they began to work for others. . . . The way is thus preparing to do a great work in the distribution of tracts and papers in other languages. <sup>15Ellen G.</sup> White, "The Spirit of Sacrifice: An Appeal for Men and Means to Send the Truth to Other Nations," The True Missionary, Jan. 1, 1874, 2. GOP 342.2

In the same article she also addressed (for the first but not the last time) the related issues of money and mission: "What is the value of money at this time," she wrote, "in comparison with the value of souls? Every dollar of our means should be considered as the Lord's, not ours; and as a precious trust from God to us . . . to be . . . carefully used in the cause of God, in the work of saving men and women." She reproached her readers: "There has been a slothful neglect, and a criminal unbelief among us as a people which has kept us back from doing the work God has left us to do in letting our light shine forth to those of other nations. There is a fearfulness to venture out and to run risks in this great work, fearing that the expenditure of means would not bring returns." Mission, she indicated, must not be treated like business, declaring: "Men will invest in patent rights and meet with heavy losses, and it is taken as a matter of course. But in the work and cause of God, men are afraid to venture. Money seems to them to be a dead loss that does not bring immediate returns when invested in the work of saving souls." White lamented that means were "selfishly retained" and "so sparingly invested in the cause of God." 16lbid. GOP 342.3

In January 1875, less than three months after Andrews' departure, White was shown in unmistakable terms that many more Adventists would go abroad from North America. Taken into vision, White saw the world, covered in "darkness like the pall of death"—and then saw it transformed by, as she exultantly exclaimed, "light, a little light, more light, much light!" After waking, she explained to witnesses that the multiplying pinpricks of light she had seen, which eventually circled the globe, represented the multiplication of Adventist "printing presses in other countries, printing the message in many languages"—and then "it was scattered like the leaves of

autumn." 17Arthur L. White, "The Vision of January 3, 1875," in Ellen G. White Estate, Notes and Papers Concerning Ellen G. White and the Spirit of Prophecy (Washington, D.C.: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1957), quotations at 143, 144. But the vision showed that it was not just Adventist publications but Adventist publishing houses (and thus Seventh-day Adventists) that would go around the world. *GOP 343.1* 

It is important to stress, indeed, that Ellen White never believed that putting publications in the post to Europe was a substitute for actual people who would witness to Jesus and prophetic truth. Instead, she saw literature as a means to an end: a way to prepare the field for missionaries, who, moreover, could do a work that publications alone couldn't achieve. In her 1871 testimony White specified: "Much can be done through the medium of the press, but still more can be accomplished if the influence of the labors of the living preacher goes with our publications. Missionaries are needed to go to other nations to preach the truth in a guarded, careful manner." She looked forward to the prospect of "missionaries volunteering to go to other nations to carry the truth to them," at which, she wrote, church members in America would "be encouraged strengthened." 18E. G. White, Testimonies for the Church, 3:204. GOP 343 2

In 1874, in California, Ellen White had received another vision that addressed mission. In it she heard and saw an angelic messenger enjoin an audience of Adventist leaders: "You are entertaining too limited ideas of the work for this time. You are trying to plan the work so that you can embrace it in your arms. You must take broader views. Your light must not be put under a bushel or under a bed, but on a candlestick that it may give light to all that are in the house. Your house is the world." This was a rebuke to those church leaders who believed that, by preaching to immigrants to the United States, the Seventh-day Adventist Church would be fulfilling its prophetic mission of preaching "to all nations, and kindreds, and tongues, and peoples." The messenger went on to reprove the view, held by some Adventists, that because Christ's coming was imminent, there was no time to evangelize the rest of the world. "It may be that you will not at once see the result of your labor, but this should not discourage you Noah preached for one hundred and twenty years to the people before the flood; yet out of the multitudes

on the earth at that time only eight were saved." <sup>19E. G. White, Life Sketches, 208. GOP 343.3</sup>

White's vision concluded terms that in brooked misunderstanding, "The . . . binding claims of the fourth commandment must be presented in clear lines. . . . The message will go in power to all parts of the world, to Oregon, to Europe, to Australia, to the islands of the sea, to all nations, tongues, and peoples. . . . Many countries are waiting for the advanced light the Lord has for them." 201bid., 209. Such unambiguous statements meant there would be no more open resistance to expansion overseas, albeit private reluctance would linger into the twentieth century. GOP 344.1

# Strengthening Mission: The Fruits of Experience

Once Seventh-day Adventist missionaries had gone abroad, Ellen White repeatedly urged the strengthening of the denomination's missions overseas. Of course, she wanted the homeland of North America to be evangelized, along with the new homelands that emerged out of Adventist missionary effort in Europe and Australia. But she identified a symbiotic relationship between missionary" and "foreign missionary" work. She distinguished between them in terms that stressed the importance of the latter for the third angel's message, including the profound statement: "The home missionary work will be farther advanced in every way when a more liberal, self-denying, self-sacrificing spirit is manifested for the prosperity of foreign missions; for the prosperity of the home work depends largely, under God, upon the reflex influence of the evangelical work in countries afar off." 21Ellen G. White, Testimonies for the Church, 6:27. The use of "evangelical" (instead of "evangelistic") was common by Adventists at this period: there are multiple instances in the minutes of the 1901 General Conference session. In 1893, in a testimony to the Battle Creek church regarding foreign missions, she had stated: "The best way to keep your own souls in the love of God is to become diligent workers for the salvation of others." 22Ellen G. White to Battle Creek Church, in General Conference Daily Bulletin, Jan. 27, 28, 1893, 15: see note 76, below. In 1907 she wrote: "Very precious to God is His work in the earth. . . . But before this work can be accomplished, we must experience here in our own country the work of the Holy Spirit upon our hearts." 23Ellen G. White, "A Missionary Education," manuscript 59 (June 18), 1907, published as "A Missionary Education," RH, Feb. 6, 1908, 24. (Italics supplied.) In Ellen White's missional thought, then, missionary work is very important: foreign missions have unique significance because the "homeland" is directly affected by work "in countries far off," yet progress in unreached regions also requires revival in the Adventist homelands. GOP 344.2

Ellen White herself spent two years in Europe (1885-1887), experiencing for herself what it was like to work in countries in which Catholicism and state Protestant churches were entrenched, and evangelism, as a consequence, far more difficult than in the egalitarian society of the United States. <sup>24On</sup> Ellen White's time in

Europe, see D. A. Delafield, Ellen G. White in Europe, 1885—1887 (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald®, 1975); and Riches, chaps. 8, 10. Subsequently, she spent nine years in Australia (1891-1900). <sup>25The classic study</sup> is Arthur L. White, Ellen G. White: The Australian Years, 1891-1900 (Washington, D.C., and Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald®, 1983). From her experience overseas, she learned several important lessons about mission. *GOP* 345.1

First, she was skeptical about leaders who claimed to know what was best overseas when their experience was mostly or only in just one country. She set out an important principle: those who lead foreign mission work should have experience in a foreign field. In late 1886, writing from Europe to a correspondent in America, she bluntly observed: "No one can tell or understand the real situation of this mission field unless he stays long enough to get the inside view of the matter and the workings of the people. Such efforts are made to suppress the truth by the ministers as you would hardly think credible " 26E. G. White to Moses J. Church, letter 61 (Dec. 20), 1886, 3, 4 Thirteen years later, regretting the way in which expansion of mission had stagnated in the 1890s, she wrote: "God's directions have not always been followed. Men have been selected to fill places on the Foreign Mission Board who had not sufficient experience for the work." <sup>27</sup>Ellen G. White, "Words of Counsel Regarding the Management of the Work of God," manuscript 91 (June 19), 1899. Filen White's testimony indicates it is vital for church leaders at the divisional and global levels to have cross-cultural experience and understanding. GOP 345.2

Second, her experiences in Europe reinforced a tendency toward trusting youth with great responsibilities in missionary work. In 1883, in an article in the Review, she had unequivocally declared: "Young men are wanted. God calls them to missionary fields." They could, she argued, more easily "adapt themselves to new climates," cultures, and "inconveniences and hardships." <sup>28Ellen G. White, "Young Men as Missionary Workers," RH, July 17, 1883, 1, 2, reprinted in idem, Testimonies for the Church, 5:393. Acknowledging that "the church may inquire whether young men can be trusted with the grave responsibilities involved in establishing and superintending a foreign mission," her response was definite: "We must manifest confidence</sup>

in our young men." <sup>29lbid.</sup> In 1886 she wrote perceptively of the needs of Europe, encouraging young people to become missionaries, and identifying the need for specialist training. "The work of our missions in foreign lands must be extended," she urged, and she looked forward to seeing "our youth . . . pressing into the ranks of the workers." She also set out what was needed for this to happen. *GOP 345.3* 

Greater effort should be made . . . to prepare [them] for labor in these foreign fields. A fund should be raised to [assist them] to prepare for the work. . . . In every mission established there should be a school for the training of laborers. The very best talent among the Germans, the French, and the Scandinavians should be enlisted in the education of promising young men and women of the different nationalities. And in all our educational institutions special facilities should be provided for the instruction and training of those who want to become missionaries among their own people in foreign lands. <sup>30</sup>Historical Sketches of the Foreign Missions of the Seventh-day Adventists (Basel, Switz.: Imprimerie Polyglotte, 1886),289. GOP 345.4

Third, Ellen White recognized during her two-year sojourn in Europe that assistance would be needed from the American heartland if progress were to be made in Europe; ever after she prioritized the needs of the foreign mission fields. During her time abroad, she made some criticisms of both indigenous believers and American missionaries in Europe. <sup>31Riches, 272</sup>. In general, however, she identified the problem as insufficient labor and resources, the solution for which required more assistance from the United States. *GOP 346.1* 

She penned a strong testimony that was published less than three weeks before Christmas 1887, around four months after her return from Europe. <sup>32Delafield, 317.</sup> "The laborers in this mission are striving to the utmost of their ability, to meet the wants of the cause. But money is needed to sustain and extend the work. The call is coming in from different countries, 'Send us a minister to preach the truth.' How shall we answer this call?" <sup>33Ellen G. White, "Our Missions in Europe," RH, Dec. 6, 1887, 1. She continued by making a seasonal appeal to church members: *GOP 346.2*</sup>

Every dollar and every dime that we can spare is needed now, to aid in carrying the message of truth to other lands. At the holiday season much is spent by our own people upon gifts and various gratifications which are not only useless but often hurtful. . . . If the money usually devoted to these objects were all brought into the mission treasury, our foreign missions would be lifted above embarrassment. . . . How can we more appropriately celebrate the coming Christmas, how better express our gratitude to God for the gift of His dear Son, than by offerings to send to all the world the tidings of His soon coming? <sup>34lbid., 1, 2.</sup> (Italics supplied.)*GOP 346.3* 

White's concern for strong financial support of foreign mission endured. In 1892 she averred "that the Lord has placed ample means in the hands of His servants . . . to meet the demands for this time, to plant the banner of truth in many dark places of the earth. But the blessing which the Lord has bestowed upon His stewards," she lamented, was frequently "misappropriated, bound up in selfish enterprises where God does not direct." She concluded: "The Lord's work calls for labourers everywhere. As God bountifully gives, we should deliberately, prayerfully resolve that we will honour God with our substance, and with the first-fruits of our increase " 35Ellen G. White to A. T. Robinson, letter 23c (July [20]), 1892. Six years later, in 1898, she returned to this theme in a pamphlet entitled An Appeal for Missions. "If God's people had the love of Christ in the heart," she wrote, "if every church member were thoroughly imbued with the spirit of self-sacrifice, if all manifested thorough earnestness, there would be no lack of funds for home and foreign missions." 36E. G. White, An Appeal for Missions: To Our Churches in America ([Battle Creek, Mich.]: S. D. A. Foreign Mission Board, <sup>1898), 6.</sup> In this pamphlet, as well as encouraging church members to donate to mission work, she directed denominational leaders to make regular earnest efforts to raise funds among members for foreign missions. In 1898 she made an "appeal to our brethren everywhere to awake, to consecrate themselves to God." She wrote: "I appeal to the officers of our conferences to make earnest efforts in our churches to arouse them to give of their means for sustaining foreign missions." 37lbid., 2. GOP 346.4

White warned church leaders against using funds to multiply

institutions in America, and she encouraged sensitivity to the needs of the rest of the world. In 1892 she urged: "Carefully should every dollar be considered, that it shall not be expended to please fancy, to administer to pride in expensive buildings, but to administer where there is a necessity, working in lines where God is working to establish His kingdom in the earth." <sup>38E. G. White to A. T. Robinson, letter 23c, 1892.</sup> In her 1898 foreign missions appeal, she expressed herself even more clearly and strongly. *GOP 347.1* 

Those who have means should understand that now is the time to use it for God. Let not means be absorbed in multiplying facilities where the work has already been established. Do not add building to building where many interests are now centered. Use the means to establish centers in new fields. Think of our missions in foreign countries. Some of them are struggling to gain even a foothold; they are destitute of even the most meager facilities. Instead of adding to facilities already abundant, build up the work in these destitute fields. Again and again the Lord has spoken in regard to this. His blessing cannot attend His people in disregarding His instruction. 39E. G. White, An Appeal for Missions, 2. GOP 347.2

The problem of pouring resources into existing centers, rather than using them to expand into unreached areas, was not confined to America, however, for missionaries took their habitual ways of working with them when they went overseas. By 1899 White was writing regretfully of lost opportunities in Africa, where "consecrated workers" could have pushed "their way into unworked fields, with the full cooperation of the men who are bearing responsibilities, [and] the influence of this work would have added large numbers to the Lord's kingdom." Unfortunately, however, "the same error has been committed in Africa that was committed in Battle Creek—a centre was made in one place at a large outlay of means, while other portions of the Lord's vineyard which should have been worked were neglected." <sup>40Ellen G. White to W. S. Hyatt, letter 183 (Nov. 9), 1899. GOP 347.3</sup>

Nevertheless, her enduring concern was that work in the homeland, where resources were plentiful, should not be prioritized over work in mission fields, where, without help from the homeland, little could

be done. In 1900 she addressed this twice, in letters to church leaders. In February she affirmed: "He [The Lord] would not have them in this work engross many workers or exhaust the treasury by erecting institutions . . . thus hindering the work of foreign missions. God calls for one hundred missionaries where there is now one. These are to go forth to foreign countries." In June she wrote: "The many fields in the Lord's vineyard which have not been touched call upon the places in which institutions are already established to understand the situation. . . . Let there not be on the part of churches, families, or individuals any withholding of the means needed to furnish God's servants with facilities for doing the work in regions beyond." She continued: "The third angel's message is to go to all parts of the world, and we are not to help in the creation of any interests which will absorb God's money in a work which has in it much which belongs not to the work for this time." 41Ellen G. White to Elder and Mrs. W. W. Prescott, letter 28 (Feb. 17), 1900; idem, "Faithful Stewardship," manuscript 34 (June 26), 1900. GOP 347 4

### An Apocalyptic Imperative for Action

As those words about "work for this time" indicate, Ellen White had a powerful sense of urgency about mission, and while this was probably enhanced by her years in Europe and Australia, they did not create it. Rather it stemmed from her understanding of eschatology and soteriology. She desired that as many people as possible would be brought into a saving relationship with Jesus as quickly as possible, and believed this put the onus on the church (and hence church members) to act. As she wrote in 1903: "Many to whom have been committed the saving truths of the third angel's message fail of realizing that the salvation of souls is dependent upon the consecration and activity of God's church." 42Ellen G. White, "A Personal Appeal to Every Believer," RH, Nov. 12, 1903, 8. She was in no doubt that before Jesus returned, the everlasting gospel would be preached to the entire world, but this meant that by giving the gospel to the world (or not) it was in the power of our Lord's disciples to expedite (or delay) the Second Advent. GOP 348.1

In 1892 she wrote to Ellet J. Waggoner, who had been called to serve in Great Britain, encouraging him to act boldly. "The fact that things move slowly in England is no reason why the great missionary work shall move slowly to meet men's habits and customs. . . . The Lord's business requires haste; souls are perishing without a knowledge of the truth." <sup>43Ellen G. White to E. J. Waggoner, letter 31 (May), 1892.</sup> In her 1898 tract An Appeal for *Missions* she proclaimed: "Unless your hearts are touched as you see the situation in foreign fields, the last message of mercy to be given to the world will be restricted, and the work which God would have done will be left undone." <sup>44E. G. White, An Appeal for Missions, 2.</sup> Also in 1898, in The Desire of Ages, she eloquently declared: *GOP 348.2* 

So now, before the coming of the Son of man, the everlasting gospel is to be preached "to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." Revelation 14:6, 14. God "hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world." *Acts 17:31*. Christ . . . does not say that all the world will be converted, but that "this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all

nations; and then shall the end come." [*Matt. 24:14.*] By giving the gospel to the world it is in our power to hasten our Lord's return. We are not only to look for but to hasten the coming of the day of God. Had the church of Christ done her appointed work as the Lord ordained, the whole world would before this have been warned, and the Lord Jesus would have come to our earth in . . . great glory. 45Ellen G. White, The Desire of Ages (Oakland: Pacific Press®, 1898), 634. *GOP 348.3* 

Christ's statement in *Matthew 24:14*, quoted here, was foundational to Ellen White's understanding and promotion of global mission, and informed her urgency on the matter. From it she derived one of her most important missional principles, namely, that every Adventist is responsible for reaching the world. She returned to this theme time and again, repeatedly using the language of Matthew 24 and Revelation 14, presenting total church-member involvement in mission as an apocalyptic imperative. She did not mean that every member was obliged to serve as a foreign missionary: those who could not go could give or pray, or witness at home. But she saw global proclamation of the gospel and the third angel's message as a primary concern of all Seventh-day Adventists. *GOP 349.1* 

In 1902 she affirmed: "The heaven-appointed purpose of giving the gospel to the world in this generation is the noblest that can appeal to any human being. It opens a field of effort to everyone whose heart Christ has touched." 46Ellen G. White, "The Definite Aim in Service," General Conference Bulletin 4:8 (Fourth Quarter 1902, 669-671, quotation t 669). The rubric states it was drawn "from manuscript prepared for a forthcoming volume on education, by Mrs. E. G. White"; text reprinted in idem, Education (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press®, 1903), 262-271, quotation at 262. The same year, writing to German-American Adventist leaders, she averred: "God has qualified His people to enlighten the world. He has entrusted them with faculties by which they are to extend His work until it shall encircle the globe. In all parts of the earth they are to establish sanitariums, schools, publishing houses, and kindred facilities for the accomplishment of His work. The closing message of the gospel is to be carried to 'every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.' Revelation 14:6." 47Ellen G. White, "To My German Brethren and Sisters in America," letter 121 (Aug. 7), 1902; published in idem,

In a sermon to the 1903 General Conference session, she enjoined her listeners: "Our question is to be, What can I do to proclaim the third angel's message? Christ came to this world to give this message to His servant to give to the churches. It is to be proclaimed to every nation and kindred and tongue and people. How are we to give it?" <sup>48</sup>Ellen G. White, "Lessons From the Sending Out of the Spies," General Conference Bulletin 5:1 (Mar. 30, 1903, 10) (from "Sermon by Mrs. E. G. White at General Conference," manuscript 10 [Mar. 28], 1903). She took this statement and reused it three times, indicating its importance in her thought. Later in 1903, in an article in the Review, she used it in adapted form in an article in which she reminded readers: "As grateful recipients of Heaven's blessings, believers are to diffuse the light of truth to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people." 49E. G. White, "A Personal Appeal," 8. She went on to use the rephrased interrogatory: "Let every Seventh-day Adventist ask himself, 'What can I do to proclaim the third angel's message?' . . . This message . . . is to be proclaimed to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. How are we to give it?" 501bid., 9. This was part of a section she excerpted and adapted into a separate testimony that was published three more times in 1904 in American Adventist periodicals. 51Ellen G. White, "The Distribution of Literature," Southern Watchman, Jan. 5, 1904, 12, 13, reprinted as idem, "The Science of Canvassing," in Kansas Worker, Feb. 10, 1904, [1], and The Central Advance, Mar. 8, 1904, 6. GOP 349.3

In 1905 she wrote to the medical missionary Daniel H. Kress: "There is a work to do all over the world, and as we near the time of the end, the Lord will impress many minds to engage in this work." 52Ellen G. White to D. H. Kress, letter 79 (Feb. 17), 1905Writing in 1907 on the education of missionaries (in an article published the following year), she declared: "As we draw near to the coming of Christ, more and still more of missionary work will engage our efforts. The message of the renewing power of God's grace will be carried to every country and clime, until the truth shall belt the world. Of the number of them that shall be sealed will be those who have come from every nation and kindred and tongue and people. From every country will be gathered men and women who will stand before the

throne of God and before (and "A Missionary Education,"	the Lamb. RH, Feb. 6,	. <sub>"</sub> 53E. G. 1908, 24).	White,	manuscript 59 3 <i>50.1</i>	, 1907

# Embodying Christ—to All People

Another important principle in Ellen White's thinking on mission was the need for missionaries to embody Christ—she was an advocate of what missiologists would call incarnational mission. She advised new missionaries not to immediately erect barriers needlessly, and to ensure that they initially represented Jesus and His love. before teaching distinctive Adventist doctrines. In 1887 she wrote to missionaries en route to Africa: "The one object to be kept before the mind is that you are reformers, and not bigots." 54Ellen G. White to Robinson and Boyd, letter 14 (June 18), 1887. In a subsequent letter she wrote of the "great and solemn work" before them to reach the people where they are. Do not feel it your bounden duty the first thing to tell the people, "We are Seventh-day Adventists; we believe the seventh day is the Sabbath; we believe in the non-immortality of the soul," and thus erect most formidable barriers between you and those you wish to reach. But speak to them, as you may have opportunity, upon points of doctrine wherein you can agree. . . . Give them evidence that you are a Christian . . . and that you love their souls. . . . Thus you will gain their confidence, and then there will be time enough for the doctrines. GOP 350.2

White advised: "Lead them along cautiously, presenting in love the truth as it is in Jesus Christ." <sup>55Ellen G.</sup> White to [C. L.] Boyd, letter 12 (June 25), 1887. GOP 351 1

Naturally, then, a theme to which she returned repeatedly was that the missionary needed to be in a transformative relationship with Jesus. In 1888, reflecting on missionary work, she wrote: "Now, the very first thing is to have our hearts and minds and ways and manners so that they will not offend." It was "the great essential point, to be sure that these workers have the spirit of Jesus Christ" and that "the love of God . . . should be in the heart of every worker," so that they would be "excellent representatives of the missionary cause." <sup>56Ellen G. White, "Remarks by Ellen G. White on Missionary Work," manuscript 10 (Oct. 23), 1888. Two years later, in 1890, she wrote to all the missionaries in South Africa: "My brethren, you are missionaries, and may you be so transformed that your strong traits of character shall do no harm to the cause of God." What they</sup>

needed, she counseled, was "the abundant grace of Christ. Self-sufficiency is a hindrance to the work. . . . May the Lord give you . . . His righteousness." <sup>57Ellen</sup> G. White to "Brethren Now Laboring as Missionaries in the Field of Africa," letter 4 (Mar. 9), 1890; the whole letter is published in idem, Testimonies to Southern Africa (Bloemfontein: South African Union Conference, 1977), 27. GOP 351.2

In 1896 she wrote to Asa T. Robinson, then serving as a missionary in Africa: *GOP 351.3* 

I feel deeply in regard to the missionary work in South Africa. I do hope you will not look to men, nor trust in men, but look to God and trust in God. We may expect large things, even the deep movings of the Spirit of God, if we have faith in His promises. . . . Has He not shown us how precious we are in His sight, and with what value He regards our souls, by giving us Jesus? We are required to unite our souls with Jesus Christ, that we may have no tame, commonplace experience. <sup>58</sup>Ellen G. White to A. T. Robinson, letter 92 (Sept. 2), 1896. *GOP 351.4* 

The following year, 1897, she wrote to Robinson again, with inspired counsel: "You must either mingle more of the oil of love, of tender compassion, with your work, your stiffness and coldness must be melted away, or you will not win your way in such a country as Africa. This country needs men who are as firm as a rock to principle, and who have also the simplicity and love of Christ." Warning against the danger of leaving "upon other minds an impression of sternness, and coldness, and harshness," she enjoined: "You need to be baptized in the cheerful sunshine of the righteousness of Jesus Christ." 59Ellen G. White to A. T. Robinson, letter 102 (Mar. 5), 1897. Two years later, reflecting on the malfunctioning of the Foreign Mission Board, she observed "that some of the men chosen [in positions of mission leadership] were not men of consecrated ability. . . . They became self-important, wise in their own conceit." White preferred leaders who had "experience in living connection with God." 60Ellen G. White, "Words of Counsel Regarding the Management of the Work of God," manuscript 91 (June 19), 1899. GOP 351.5

Her desire that the missionary represent Christ to indigenous

peoples led her to have no sympathy with those who proposed conforming to racial prejudices in order to smooth the path of mission. Writing from Australia in 1900, she expressed herself very strongly, in terms that were, sadly, to be a standing rebuke to Adventists for much of the century. *GOP 351.6* 

In regard to the question of caste and colour, nothing would be gained by making a decided distinction, but the Spirit of God would be grieved. We are all supposed to be preparing for the same heaven. We have the same heavenly Father and the same Redeemer, who loved us and gave Himself for us all, without any distinction. We are nearing the close of this earth's history, and it does not become any child of God to have a proud, haughty heart and turn from any soul who loves God, or to cease to labour for any soul for whom Christ has died. When the love of Christ is cherished in the heart as it should be, when the sweet, subduing spirit of the love of God fills the soul-temple, there will be no caste, no pride of nationality; no difference will be made because of the colour of the skin. Each one will help the one who needs tender regard and consolation, of whatever nationality he may be GOP 352.1

Ask yourselves if Christ would make any difference. In assembling His people would He say, Here brother, or, Here sister, your nationality is not Jewish; you are of a different class. Would He say, Those who are dark-skinned may file into the back seats; those of a lighter skin may come up to the front seats. GOP 352.2

In one place the proposition was made that a curtain be drawn between the coloured people and the white people. I asked, Would Jesus do that? This grieves the heart of Christ. The colour of the skin is no criterion as to the value of the soul. By the mighty cleaver of truth we have all been quarried out from the world. God has taken us, all classes, all nations, all languages, all nationalities, and brought us into His workshop, to be prepared for His temple. <sup>61Ellen</sup> G. White to W. S. Hyatt, letter 26 (Feb. 15), 1900. GOP 352 3

# **Enlightening the Whole Earth**

Finally, as she entered her 60s, White increasingly emphasized mission to Catholics and adherents of non-Christian religions. This, it must be stressed, was not the accepted practice of Seventh-day Adventists at the time. The situation in the 1890s was captured by William A. Spicer, missionary leader in the 1890s, General Conference secretary from 1903 to 1922, and then General Conference president until 1930. On retiring, he reminded delegates to the 1930 General Conference session of how, 40 years before, *GOP* 352.4

we didn't have much of an idea of going to the heathen. We didn't expect to go in any really strong way. We never expected to go to the Catholic countries. We thought: We will get a few along the edges, and the Lord will come; but the Lord all the time had in mind this purpose, of calling the heathen, of calling through all the Catholic lands for His people to come. <sup>62W. A. Spicer, "I Know Whom I Have Believed," RH, June 26, 1930, 3. GOP 352.5</sup>

That Adventists' attitudes changed was largely because of Ellen G. White. She wanted nominal Christians in Western countries to hear full biblical truth, but as her life went on, she looked beyond what contemporaries saw as "civilized countries," directing Adventist attention to the heartlands of animism and of what today we call world religions. GOP 353.1

In 1887 she wrote passionately of "France and Germany, with their great cities and teeming population," of "Italy, Spain, and Portugal, after so many centuries of darkness, freed from Romish tyranny, and opened to the word of God," of "Holland, Austria, Roumania, Turkey, Greece, and Russia, the home of millions upon millions, whose souls are as precious in the sight of God as our own, [but] who know nothing of the special truths for this time." <sup>63E. G. White, "Our Missions in Europe," RH, Dec. 6, 1887, 1. In 1900 she declared: "There is a great work to be done in England. The light radiating from London should beam forth . . . to regions beyond." In a 1902 testimony, published in 1904, she affirmed: "There is a work to be done in Scandinavia." <sup>64E. G. White, Testimonies for the Church, 6:25. E. G.</sup></sup>

White to "My Brethren in Europe," letter 189 (Dec. 7), 1902; published in full in idem, Testimonies for the Church, 8:38-40.  $_{GOP\ 353.2}$ 

Meanwhile, with an eye on the non-Christian world, in 1890 she had written: "God has a great work to be accomplished in Africa. . . . Be not intimidated by apparent difficulties which threaten to obstruct your pathway. . . . This is God's work, and He will make the rough places smooth, He will prepare the way before you. The work which is to be done in foreign countries can never be done by mortal man unaided by divine wisdom." <sup>65E.</sup> G. White to "Brethren Now Laboring as Missionaries in the Field of Africa," letter 4 (Mar. 9), 1890 (idem, Testimonies to Southern Africa, <sup>25)</sup>. In an article for the 1902 Week of Prayer readings, she affirmed: *GOP 353.3* 

The whole world is opening to the gospel. Ethiopia is stretching out her hands unto God. From Japan and China and India, from the still-darkened lands of our own continent, from every quarter of this world of ours, comes the cry of sin-stricken hearts for a knowledge of the God of love. Millions upon millions have never so much as heard of God or of His love revealed in Christ. It is their right to receive this knowledge. They have an equal claim with us in the Saviour's mercy. And it rests with us who have received the knowledge, with our children to whom we may impart it, to answer their cry. <sup>66E. G. White, "The Definite Aim in Service," 669 (idem, Education, 262, 263). GOP 353.4</sup>

In a testimony published in 1909 she stated: "In Africa, in China, in India, there are thousands, yes, millions, who have not heard the message of the truth for this time. They must be warned. The islands of the sea are waiting for a knowledge of God."  $^{67\text{E. G. White,}}$  Testimonies for the Church, 9:51.  $_{GOP}$  353.5

The work was, in fact, worldwide, and she explicitly emphasized this—and stressed, too, the responsibility those in Christian and Protestant strongholds had for those elsewhere, and did so with greater explicitness as she grew older. In 1892, in the first edition of Gospel Workers, she wrote: "The world needs labor now. Calls are coming in from every direction like the Macedonian cry, 'Come over and help us.' " 68Ellen G. White, Gospel Workers, Instruction for the Minister

and the Missionary (Battle Creek, Mich.: Review and Herald ®, 1892), 180. It was an analogy that she reflected on and returned to. In 1900, in an article in the Australasian *Union Conference Record*, she urged believers in Christian lands to be listening for the cry . . . from far-off lands, "Come over and help us." These are not so easily reached, and perhaps not so ready for the harvest, as the fields within our sight, but they must not be neglected. We want to push the triumphs of the cross. Our watchword is to be, "Onward, ever onward!" Our burden for the "regions beyond" can never be laid down until the whole earth shall be lightened with the glory of the Lord. 69Ellen G. White, "An Appeal," Australasian Union Conference Record, Jan. 1, 1900, 2. GOP 353 6

The importance she attached to this testimony is evident from the fact that it was republished, with minor differences, in 1900, in volume 6 of *Testimonies*, and again in 1903, in the Atlantic Union Gleaner 70Cf. E. G. White, Testimonies for the Church, 6:25, 27; in Atlantic Union Gleaner, June 17, 1903, 285, 286. In an essay that also appeared in Testimonies, volume 6, and soon after formed the basis for an article for the 1901 Week of Prayer readings, she powerfully affirmed: "The vineyard includes the whole world, and every part of it is to be worked. . . . There should be representatives of present truth in every city, and in the remote parts of the earth. The whole earth is to be illuminated with the glory of God's truth. The light is to shine to all lands and all peoples." 71E. G. White, Testimonies for the Church, 6:23, 24; idem, "Our Duty," General Conference Bulletin 4:4 (Fourth Quarter 1901, 572). She concluded this essay with words from the 1900 Record article: "Our burden for the 'regions beyond' can never be laid down until the whole earth shall be lightened with the glory of the Lord," 72E. G. White, Testimonies for the Church, 6:29 (and "Our Duty," 573).GOP 354.1

In 1907 White stressed that the final message was not just for Christians, declaring (in a testimony that was published twice within 12 months and that she reprinted two years before her death): "God's work in the earth in these last days is to reflect the light that Christ brought into the world. . . . Men and women in heathen darkness are to be reached. . . . These heathen nations will accept

eagerly the efforts made to instruct them in a knowledge of God." 73E. G. White, manuscript 59, 1907, published in 1908 as "A Missionary Education," 24 (see note 23). Reprinted as idem, Special Testimonies, Series B, no. 11, The Madison School (1908), 27; also reprinted in Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press®, 1913), 532.. In 1912, in an article in the Review, she affirmed: "Angels of God are moving upon the hearts and consciences of the people of other nations, and honest souls are troubled as they witness the signs of the times in the unsettled state of the nations. The inquiry arises in their hearts, What will be the end of all these things?" <sup>74Ellen G</sup>. White, "Young Men as Missionaries," RH, May 19, 1912, 3. GOP 354.2

As her life drew to a close, she returned to the theme of the Macedonian-like cry for assistance when she revised Gospel Workers. She entirely rewrote the paragraph that in 1892 had simply referred to "calls . . . from every direction" and moved it to a section on foreign mission instead of on how to witness. The result was both greater urgency and new specificity about whence the call for help came: "I feel intensely over the needs of foreign countries, as they have been presented before me. In all parts of the world angels of God are opening doors that a little while ago were closed to the message of truth. From India, from Africa, from China, and from many other places is heard the cry, 'Come over and help us.' " 75Ellen G. White, Gospel Workers: Instruction for All Who Are "Laborers Together With God" (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald®, 1915), 465. Having begun our analysis with the account of Ellen White's publishing vision in 1848, with this testimony, published in the year of her death, we are nearing the end of our survey of Ellen White's principles of mission. GOP 354.3

#### Conclusion

We will consider one more testimony before, like Lewis Carroll's White Rabbit, we come to the end and then stop. It is a letter Ellen White wrote from Australia to the 1893 General Conference session, in which she challenged those attending the session to think beyond their relatively comfortable situation and their wants, in order that the gospel and the third angel's message be proclaimed across all the world. The reluctance of early-American Adventists to see the rest of the world as being their concern had lingered for several decades after the dispatch of J. N. Andrews to Europe. North American Adventists were very active in outreach to immigrants to the United States and Canada from other countries, but many continued to feel little responsibility for sharing the truths they held so precious with people outside North America. Ellen White addressed this parochialism on several occasions, but in particularly stark terms in 1893. GOP 355.1

Her words can be applied to us today, for increasingly there is talk—not least, but not only, in North America—that Adventists here (wherever here may be) don't need to worry about the rest of the world: that we can leave to fend for themselves Adventists in Afghanistan, Algeria, and Azerbaijan, in Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei, and Burkina Faso, in Cambodia, China, and Chad, in Iraq, Iran, India, and Indonesia, in Kuwait, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan, in Libya, Lebanon, and Laos, in Mali, Mauritania, and Morocco or in Malaysia, Mongolia, and Myanmar, and in Senegal, Sudan, Somalia, Syria, Saudi Arabia, and Sri Lanka—or even in the great cities of Western Europe, where the ratios of Adventists to general population are similar to those in the 10/40 window. So Ellen White's challenge to American Adventists in 1893 is, I think, still relevant and salutary for us today. *GOP* 355.2

"Brethren and sisters in Battle Creek, who have had those precious truths set before you," she wrote, GOP 355.3

I ask you to think of the many, many souls who need to hear the message of redeeming love. . . . While you . . . have the privilege of receiving from Jesus the living water, will you . . . feast your souls upon the riches of his marvellous love and grace, and yet feel no

special burden for those who are still in darkness and error? I ask you to present some tangible proof that you appreciate the love of God in sending his Son into the world, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life. GOP 355.4

We want to know if you will love your neighbor as yourself? Will you make any personal sacrifice that these saving truths may go to the destitute regions, where the people are perishing for the bread of life? Are you disciples of Christ? . . . Will you cooperate with Jesus? If you appreciate the truth, wherein do you earnestly labor that it may be carried to others? <sup>76</sup>Ellen G. White to "Brethren and Sisters in Battle Creek," Dec. 21, 1892, read by W. W. Prescott to the Sabbath Service at the Ministerial Institute preceding the 1893 General Conference session, Jan. 28, 1893 (text in General Conference Daily Bulletin, Jan. 27, 28, 1893, 12-16, quoted on pp. 14, 15). GOP 356.1

She then reviewed certain particular issues in Battle Creek and reproved the church members' collective self-regard, rebuking what she described as their "pride," before returning to the theme of worldwide mission. GOP 356.2

Our people are not half awake to do all in their power with the facilities within their reach, to extend the message of warning to the world. New churches must be built, new congregations organized. Let the light shine to all lands and all people. GOP 356.3

The whole earth is to be lightened with the glory of God's truth. The Lord will not close up the period of probation until the warning message shall be more distinctly proclaimed. The trumpet must give a certain sound. The law of God is to be magnified [in its] true sacred character [and] the message of Christ's righteousness is to sound from one end of the world to the other. This is the glory of God which closes the work of the third angel. *GOP 356.4* 

Are the people in Battle Creek asleep? Are they paralyzed? . . . You have long expected the wonderful startling events that are to take place just prior to the coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. Now I ask, Are you prepared to give the trumpet a certain sound? . . . Who feels day by day that he belongs to the great co-partnership for honoring Christ by working

out the Lord's plan for the redemption of men? The best way to keep your own souls in the love of God is to become diligent workers for the salvation of others. *GOP 356.5* 

The Lord is coming; the scenes of this earth's history are fast closing, and our work is not done. We have been waiting in anxious expectancy for the cooperation of the human agency in advancing the work. All heaven, if I may use the expression, is impatiently waiting for men to cooperate with the divine agencies in working for the salvation of souls. . . . Who will arise and shine because the light has come, and the glory of the Lord hath risen upon them? Who have joined themselves to the Lord in holy covenant to become channels for the communication of heaven's light and grace to our world. <sup>77Ibid., 16:</sup> in the original there is no question mark at the end of the final paragraph, presumably a printer's error. GOP 356.6

We have seen that Ellen White set out powerful principles for foreign mission, but she had one overarching principle and overriding concern for foreign mission: that it be done! That people whose lives have been transformed by Jesus Christ tell the world about Him and the good news of wholeness in this world and hope for the world to come. The world church collectively is responsible for the whole world. *GOP 357.1* 

Ellen G. White was instrumental in our denomination's transition from North American sect to worldwide movement. Yet, a century after her death, "our work is not yet done" and one cannot help wondering whether "all heaven" is still "impatiently waiting for men to cooperate with the divine agencies in working for the salvation of souls." Despite dramatic church growth in Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa, there are billions of people in Asia, the Middle East, North Africa, and Western Europe, captivated by Buddhism, Hinduism, and other Asian traditions, by Islam, and by secular postmodernism, who have yet to hear "the everlasting gospel." Might not Ellen White's question to "the people in Battle Creek" still apply to those in Berrien Springs, Silver Spring, Takoma Park, Deer Park, Stanborough Park, Salisbury Park, Solusi, Somerset West, Fox Valley, Loma Linda, and other famous historic centers of Adventism? Are we sleeping? The need that Ellen White wrote about repeatedly and passionately in her lifetime is still with us: for

all Seventh-day Adventists, everywhere, today, to be part of "the great co-partnership for honoring Christ" and to "have joined themselves to the Lord in holy covenant to become channels for the communication of heaven's light and grace to our world." *GOP* 357.2

Chapter 19 - Ellen G. White's Dedicated Hands<sup>1The</sup> content of this chapter was presented orally at the last Friday (July 10) evening program of the 2015 General Conference session, in San Antonio, Texas.

James R. Nix

One day when I came to see Grandmother, she was just leaving her room to go to the balcony. And she had been writing in her bedroom for a change. She didn't always write in the same place. And...I talked to her, stepped up to her, walked with her out to the balcony, and she said, "Grace, all these years the Lord has steadied this faithful right hand."

Now when she was first asked to write, she felt she couldn't write so much. Her hand trembled. Ever since her accident, her hand was trembling. And she thought: "How can I write out what I have seen—all these things." But when she decided to do what the Lord asked her to do, and tried it, then the Lord did steady her hand..

—Grace White-Jacques <sup>2</sup>Grace White-Jacques, video recordings at Elmshaven, St. Helena, California, Aug. 2-6,1987.

Hands. Ellen White's hands. Throughout her 87 years of life Ellen White's hands were constantly following King Solomon's admonition, "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might" (*Eccl. 9:10*, NKJV). *GOP 358.1* 

Mention Ellen White's hands to most Adventists, and probably the first thing that comes to mind is all the writing that she did during her lifetime. Writing, writing, writing. Always writing. But her hands did much more than just write. As a child, Ellen used her small hands to help her twin sister, Elizabeth, climb over logs <sup>3Arthur L.</sup> White, Ellen G. White (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald®, 1981-1985), 1:20, <sup>21.</sup> and to help coax the family's milk cow to free itself after it had become stuck in the mud. <sup>4lbid., 20</sup> GOP 358.2

Hands—yes, even as a girl, Ella, as she was called by her twin sister, was already busy using her hands to help others. Through the years those hands helped literally thousands of people.

Whether it was hand-sewing a piece of clothing for someone, knitting socks for careworn feet, helping to treat the sick—both young and old—or merely inviting people into her home who needed a place to stay temporarily, Ellen's hands and heart were constantly busy helping others. GOP 358.3

When Ellen was 9 years old, she was hit in the face with a stone thrown by an angry school-mate. <sup>51bid., 28.</sup> The accident ended her schooling because her hand shook terribly when she tried to write, and the letters seemed to run together on the page when she tried to read. <sup>61bid., 31</sup>; Ellen G. White, Spiritual Gifts (Battle Creek, Mich.: James White, 1860), 2:11. Understanding what it was like to be shunned because of the facial disfigurement from her injury resulted in Ellen's lifelong empathy and concern for the poor and disadvantaged. *GOP 359.1* 

#### **Hands That Knit**

A few years after her childhood accident, Ellen and her family joined the followers of William Miller, who were looking for Jesus to return around 1844. Still suffering from the aftereffects of her injury, Ellen was unable to go out and share her newfound belief with others. However, she could use her hands to earn 25 cents a day knitting socks, providing money to buy literature for others to distribute. <sup>7A.</sup> L. White, 1:45; Ellen G. White, Christian Experience and Teachings of Ellen G. White (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press®, 1940), 39; idem, Life Sketches of Ellen G. White (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press®, 1915), 47. GOP 359.2

Along with thousands of other Millerites, Ellen was terribly disappointed when Christ did not return as expected. Mere weeks later God gave her the first of hundreds of visions and prophetic dreams. In that first vision Ellen was shown that if they kept their eyes fixed on Jesus, despite their terrible disappointment, eventually the small band would reach their heavenly destination. This focus on Christ continued to be central throughout her life. She was also told to share publicly what God was showing her in vision. Later she was instructed to write out the visions. When she tried to do so, she discovered that her hand was steady so that she could write. 8E. G. White, Spiritual Gifts, 2:60; idem, Testimonies for the Church (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press®, 1948), 1:73; idem, Christian Experience and Teachings, 78; Ella M. Robinson, Stories of My Grandmother (Nashville: Southern, 1967), 192,193. GOP 359.3

Before her fledgling ministry had many fruits by which to judge its genuineness, several times while in vision Ellen's hands held up Bibles, reminding people that although God was speaking through her as His messenger, her work ultimately was not to focus on herself and her writings, but to uplift Jesus and His Word, the Holy Bible. GOP 359.4

In 1846 Ellen gave her hand in marriage to James White, a committed, young, energetic Adventist preacher. Theirs would be a blended partnership lasting until he died at the age of 60 in 1881. GOP 359.5

In 1849 Ellen's folded hands joined others in praying over the newly

printed copies of the first issue of the little paper *The Present Truth* before they were mailed. Throughout her long life Ellen produced many published articles and books. From her pen also came much helpful counsel about establishing and operating publishing houses around the world. In fact, today the Seventh-day Adventist Church operates more than 60 publishing houses and branches worldwide. 9Based upon statistics from the Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Dec. 31, 2013. There the dedicated hands of modern-day workers prepare truth-filled literature not only to be read by *GOP* 359.6

Adventists but also hand-delivered by thousands of literature evangelists and others to share the news of Christ's soon return. GOP 360.1

Ellen's prayer, along with those of the others for our first little paper, was just one of many times during her long life when her busy hands were folded while she talked with God, whom she often addressed as "My Father"—not "Our Father," but "My Father." GOP 360.2

# **Hands Wrung With Regret**

Four boys were born to James and Ellen White: Henry, Edson, Willie, and John Herbert. Two of them died young. In fact, nearly 50 years after the death of Ellen's firstborn son, Henry, who had died at the age of 16, she said to her daughter-in-law, "May, if we had only known then what we know now, we could have saved Henry." And while she was speaking, the still-grieving mother was wringing her hands. <sup>10Story told</sup> by Grace White-Jacques to James Nix. *GOP* 360.3

With boys to raise, a husband to support, and others to take care of, it is no surprise that Ellen had her hands full. On one occasion the exhausted mother tied her infant son Edson to her lap in order to prevent him from falling off in case she fell asleep as her husband drove them in their buggy to an appointment. <sup>11James</sup> White and Ellen White, Life Sketches of James White and Ellen G. White (Battle Creek, Mich. Review and Herald®, 1888), 292. Believe it or not, James didn't always drive them; sometimes Ellen did. <sup>12Ellen</sup> G. White to J. H. Kellogg, letter 7 (formerly letter 97a) (Apr. 26), 1886; quoted in A. L. White, 3:342. You might find her riding a horse, firmly grasping its reins, in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado or elsewhere. *GOP* 360.4

When the Whites arrived with their first two boys in Rochester, New York, in 1852, their living conditions were quite pinched. James brought home two old bedsteads for which he had paid 25 cents, plus six chairs, no two of which were alike, for which he had given \$1.00. Later he brought home four other chairs, none of which had seats, which cost him 62 cents for the lot. The frames were good, so Ellen's hands soon made seating for them. <sup>13A. L. White, 1:230.</sup> *GOP 360.5* 

Several months after the family moved to Battle Creek in 1855, Ellen's hands were frantically rolling Willie, her third son, on the grass. The toddler had fallen into a tub of mop water and nearly drowned while playing "boat" with a floating stick. Others thought Willie was dead, but Ellen's hands kept rolling him on the ground to expel more water from his lungs. After several minutes her efforts were successful. <sup>14lbid., 337</sup>·GOP 360.6



#### A New Vision to Write

In 1858 James and Ellen White visited Adventists in Lovett's Grove. Ohio. On Sunday afternoon, in a rural schoolhouse, following a funeral service conducted by her husband. Ellen stood to offer her condolences. While speaking, she was given a vision, part of which included what is now referred to as the great controversy story—a behind-the-scenes portrayal of the cosmic struggle between Christ and Satan. Two days later, while they traveled by train from Ohio to Jackson, Michigan, Ellen shared with her husband more of what God had shown her in the vision. James was clear that they must print the vision as soon as she had time to write it out. But Satan had other plans! Shortly after arriving in Jackson, while they were in the home of Dan and Abigail Palmer, Ellen suffered a stroke of paralysis. Her left arm and leg were paralyzed. The believers prayed for her recovery, and the following day she was strong enough to return home by train to Battle Creek, where James immediately put his wife to bed. But she was determined to write out the vision. GOP 361.1

At first she could write only a page a day, then rest for three, but gradually she grew stronger, and her hand was able to write more pages 16E. G. White, Life Sketches of Ellen G. White, 161-163. The first edition of what today is called The Great Controversy was published later that year. After she completed the manuscript for the book, in a subsequent vision God showed Ellen White that the stroke of paralysis she suffered in Jackson was actually Satan's her. <sup>17Ibid.,</sup> 163. Given that kill Ellen White's understanding regarding that cosmic battle permeates nearly all of her subsequent writings and that to this day her insights about it impact almost everything the Seventh-day Adventist Church teaches and does, no wonder Satan did not want the book written! GOP 361.2

Just days following the organization of the General Conference in 1863, Ellen White was given a major vision on health. Among several things shown to her that have helped Seventh-day Adventists to be one of the healthiest faith communities in the world, such as cleanliness, adequate sleep, exercise, and not using alcohol or tobacco, was instruction about not eating flesh foods. At

the time, Ellen—by her own admission—was a "great meat eater." Later she recalled her struggle to give up eating it. She stated, *GOP* 361.3

I was a great meat eater. But when faint, I placed my arms across my stomach and said: "I will not taste a morsel. I will eat simple food, or I will not eat at all." Bread was distasteful to me. I could seldom eat a piece as large as a dollar. Some things in the reform I could get along with very well, but when I came to the bread I was especially set against it. When I made these changes I had a special battle to fight. The first two or three meals, I could not eat. I said to my stomach: "You may wait until you can eat bread." In a little while I could eat bread, and graham bread, too. This I could not eat before; but now it tastes good, and I have had no loss of appetite. <sup>18E. G. White, Testimonies for the Church, 2:371. GOP 361.4</sup>

Ellen White's inspired counsels regarding diet and other aspects of healthful living, including her call to establish health institutions to help others regain their health, are important legacies that continue to have a positive impact on Adventists and are an important witness throughout the world. Today the Seventh-day Adventist Church operates approximately 175 hospitals and sanitariums around the world, in which the loving hands of thousands of caring health practitioners share the benefits of good health with millions of patients every year. <sup>19Based</sup> upon statistics from the Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Dec. 31, 2013. *GOP* 362.1

And all the while, Ellen was writing, writing, writing. Always writing. Later in 1863, while on a trip with her husband, she wrote early and late, and even between meetings. On Sunday afternoon, while sitting a very short distance from where Elder J. N. Andrews stood preaching, Ellen wrote six handwritten pages of testimony that she read to the group following the close of John Andrews' sermon. When later asked what she thought of Brother Andrews as a speaker, she replied that she couldn't say, as it had been a long time since she had heard him. <sup>20A. L. White, 2:69</sup>.GOP 362.2

# **Frugal Hands**

Though always generous with others, Ellen White was frugal personally, possibly to a fault. On one of her visits to the Pacific Press Publishing Company, then located in Oakland, California, she noticed a large number of printed hat ads that were to be discarded because of some error. Since they were printed only on one side, with the reverse side blank, she asked that the discarded ads be made into writing pads for her to use. Soon, on the blank side of the sheets of paper, her hands were busily writing the manuscript for what became the 1884 edition of The Great Controversy. GOP 362.3

Surprising as it may be, given that Ellen's formal education ended about the age of 9 because of her childhood injury, she came to advocate education, but not just any kind of education. The counsels that came from her pen, based upon the visions she had received, urged Adventists to establish schools featuring a Biblebased. Christ-centered focus coupled with practical work experience. Not only did she use pen and voice to urge the establishment of such schools, but the 68-year-old Ellen White used her own two hands to set in place the cornerstone for the first building of what today is Avondale College in Australia. Her approach to such things was to advise as well as to participate personally! Today, the hands, hearts, and minds of thousands of dedicated teachers are creatively involved in helping to educate students in more than 7,500 Seventh-day Adventist-owned and operated schools worldwide, preschool through graduate school. 21Based upon statistics from the Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Dec. 31, 2013. GOP 362 4

Writing. Writing. Writing. Always writing. During Ellen White's lifetime, quill pens gave way to dip pens and eventually to fountain pens. <sup>22A.</sup> L. White, 3:12. Although dip pens are not listed in this quote, photographs of Ellen depict her holding a dip pen. On one occasion she ended up sending her husband a very short handwritten letter after spilling ink, thus creating an unsightly blotch on the longer letter that she had originally written to him. <sup>23lbid., 26.</sup> One night her dorm room at South Lancaster Academy was so cold that when she

awoke in the morning the ink had congealed in its bottle<sup>24Ellen G</sup>. White to P. T. Magan, letter 184 (Dec. 7), 1901; quoted in A. L. White, 5:142. SO it could not be used until it had thawed out! *GOP 362.5* 

Writing, always writing. Estimates vary regarding how many handwritten pages she wrote during her lifetime. On July 16, 2015, the 100th anniversary of Ellen White's death, the White Estate placed on its Web site—ellenwhite.org—free access to all of Ellen White's thousands of pages of typed letters and manuscripts that are preserved in its vault. GOP 363.1

During 11 months in 1892, shortly after arriving in Australia, Ellen wrote 2,500 pages of letter-sized paper for publication, at a time when physically she was unable to do almost anything because of terrible suffering from a painful form of arthritis. Even so, her right hand from the elbow down was preserved so that she could write. <sup>25A.</sup> L. White, <sup>4:32.</sup> And what book was she starting to write? Her classic volume on the life of Christ: *The Desire of AgesGOP 363.2* 

While working on that spiritual masterpiece, Ellen White wrote to O. A. Olsen, then president of the General Conference: *GOP* 363.3

Oh, how inefficient, how incapable I am of expressing the things which burn in my soul in reference to the mission of Christ I know not how to speak or trace with pen the large subject of the atoning sacrifice. . . . I tremble for fear lest I shall belittle the great plan of salvation by cheap words. <sup>26Ellen G.</sup> White to O. A. Olsen, letter 40 (July 15), 1892; quoted in idem, Selected Messages (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald®, 1958, 1980), 3:115. *GOP* 363 4

Tremble she might, but not her right hand. This time the trembling was for fear of writing words that fell short of rightly representing Christ and His mission. *GOP 363.5* 

Sometimes Ellen White began her letters to people with exclamations ofjoy or thanksgiving; other times she expressed sorrow or concern. And almost always she shared counsel. About her letters, she once wrote to someone: *GOP 363.6* 

Weak and trembling, I arose at three o'clock in the morning to write

to you. God was speaking through clay. You might say that this communication was only a letter. Yes, it was a letter, but prompted by the Spirit of God to bring before your minds things that have been shown me. In these letters which I write, in these testimonies that I bear, I am presenting to you that which the Lord has presented to me. I do not write one article in the paper expressing merely my own ideas. They are what God has opened before me in vision—the precious rays of light shining from the throne. <sup>27E. G.</sup> White, Testimonies for the Church, 5:67. GOP 363.7

The same hand that on occasion had to write strong counsels also wrote words of empathy and understanding. To one recipient she wrote, "I do not consider your case hopeless; if I did, my pen would not be tracing these lines." <sup>28lbid., 2:562</sup>. GOP 364.1

Hope among the words of counsel! In another place she wrote: "Even as I write, my eyes are filled with tears. I have tried to give you the words spoken by the One through whom I have often received instruction." <sup>29Ellen G. White to W. O. Palmer, letter 163 (June 26), 1902.</sup> GOP 364.2

In late 1891, shortly after she arrived in Australia, God used Ellen White's hands in a most unusual way. Nathaniel D. Falkhead, a respected businessman who was also a prominent member of the Freemasons and several other secret societies, became an Adventist. His business abilities soon led to his employment as the Echo Publishing House treasurer, but his lodge responsibilities increasingly took precedence over his interests in the work of God. *GOP* 364.3

In a private interview Ellen White warned Falkhead about the impossibility of his being deeply involved in his various organizations and a wholehearted Christian at the same time. While repeating words spoken to her by her angel guide, twice she made a movement with her hand. Falkhead recognized that she had made two "secret signs," the latter one known only to the highest order of the male-only organization to which he belonged—a sign therefore that no woman could know. After hearing that by such involvement he could lose his soul, he became convinced that her testimony to him was of God. In time he was able to write to Ellen

White that his terms of office in the various societies had ended. GOP 364.4

Hands, busy hands. Whether used by God to give a secret sign to help save a person, working in her garden, <sup>30A. L. White, 2:186.</sup> picking fruit from fruit trees, or holding her Bible while leading out in family worship in her home after her husband's death, Ellen's hands were always busy. *GOP 364.5* 

A White family story, dating probably from the 1860s, recalled James's lack of enthusiasm for his wife's interest in using her hands to braid rag rugs. Repeatedly he asked her to put out of sight the piles of various-colored rags that she had saved for making her rag carpets. Apparently in an act of total frustration, one day James walked home from the office singing: GOP 364.6

There'll be no rag carpets there; There'll be no rag carpets there. In heaven above, where all is love, There'll be no rag carpets there. GOP 364.7

Ellen got the point. She soon traded the piles of rags for balls of yarn that she used for knitting socks, because that was something else that her busy hands could be doing for others. In fact, it is said that while listening to Elders E. J. Waggoner and A. T. Jones preach during the 1888 General Conference session, Ellen White sat in the congregation knitting socks. Why not? After all, there were church workers in the northern parts of Europe who would soon be facing another cold winter. So while her heart was being warmed by the preaching of Elders Jones and Waggoner, her hands were busily knitting socks to warm the cold feet of our missionaries. <sup>31This</sup> was something that the author heard from Arthur L.

White. Ellen White had a passion for mission everywhere—from the neighbor next door to people living in the remotest parts of the world. She also strongly urged comprehensive evangelism for the large cities of earth. *GOP 364.8* 

### **Hands That Help to Heal**

In the 1860s and 1870s James White suffered several strokes that greatly diminished his health. Each new stroke renewed Ellen's determination to do all she could to help nurse her invalid husband back to health. After one stroke, while they were living in Greenville, Michigan, she told her son to buy three shovels—one for him, one for her, and one for his father, James. When presented with the new shovel along with his wife's rehab plan for him, James protested. Although Ellen blistered her hands using her shovel in their garden, her efforts inspired James at least to go through the motions. 32A. L. White, 3:186.GOP 365.1

Later, while still trying to help her husband regain his health, Ellen White sent word secretly to their neighbors not to come help them harvest their hay. James was very disappointed, but not Ellen. She told him to stand on the wagon while she and their son, Willie, raked and then pitched the hay up to him. Later with her hands she stacked the hay as James pitched it up to her. People going by who saw this were surprised, but Ellen was undeterred. <sup>33Ibid., 188</sup>. Whatever her hands found to do, she did with all her might! *GOP* 365.2

Percy Magan, a recently converted Irish immigrant, came to live in Ellen White's home for a short time. Sizing up the bashful young man while kindly smoothing his coat, she said to him, "That is nice cloth . . . but I see there is a button off. Bring me my sewing basket, and I'll sew it on for you." Her motherly comments and loving hands quickly put the young man at ease. <sup>34The</sup> young man was Percy T. Magan, according to Merlin L. Neff, For God and C.M.E.: A Biography of Percy Tilson Magan Upon the Historical Background of the Educational and Medical Work of Seventh-day Adventists (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press®, [1964]), <sup>29</sup>·GOP 365.3

Ellen White's empathy also extended to animals that were mistreated. On one occasion, as she was out riding in her buggy, she happened upon a man who was beating his thin, bony mare. When Ellen admonished the man that the animal was doing its best, he removed half the load from the wagon that the poor animal was

pulling, and while apologizing to Ellen White, he told her that he would come back later to retrieve the rest of the load.  $^{35\text{Robinson}}$ ,  $^{20}$ .  $_{GOP,365,4}$ 

Although we can imagine Ellen's busy hands sewing on a button or helping those around her who were less fortunate, we rarely think about those same hands gently petting her horses, or putting her arms around the neck of one of her cows that was distraught in order to comfort it after it lost its calf. Ellen could not "bear to see animals abused because, as she said, 'they can't tell us of their sufferings.' " <sup>36lbid.</sup> GOP 365.5

Throughout Ellen White's long life she practiced what she taught: that "Seventh-day Adventists should be foremost in uplifting Christ before the world." <sup>37</sup>Ellen G. White, Evangelism (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald®, 1946), 188. Picture her using her hands to help steady herself as she climbed up on some hastily assembled tables in a beer hall in Europe in the 1880s. It was the only place the local Adventist congregation had found to rent where she could preach. Later she recalled that after she spoke for the last time in Christiania (now Oslo), Norway, people crowded around her to shake her hand. She said that "they held my hand so firmly and lovingly [that] I could not withdraw it readily." <sup>38A. L. White, 3:328.</sup> With tears running down their faces, they said goodbye to her, knowing that she would soon be returning to the United States. Her outreach to others, whether nearby or around the world, was the natural expression of a person who lived what she preached. *GOP 366.1* 

A few years before her death, an evangelical publisher contacted Ellen White about producing a book exclusively for them to sell. She agreed to meet with representatives from the company at Elmshaven, her home in northern California. They met in her second-floor writing room. After hearing their presentation, she started to pick up her pen in order to sign the contract they had brought with them, but then she laid the pen back down. After listening to a shortened repeat presentation from the publishing company representatives, she tactfully changed the subject, rather than picking up her pen to sign the contract. After accompanying the men downstairs to the parlor, Ellen White's son, Willie White,

returned to where his mother was still seated. He asked her why she had not signed the contract, because he had seen her pick up the pen as though she were going to do so. Her reply reminds all of us about God's care over every aspect of His church. She said that as she picked up her pen she saw an angel standing behind the representatives, gesturing, and she knew that she was not to sign the contract. And sign it she never did. GOP 366.2

Ellen White's books can be published by Adventist publishing houses worldwide. In fact, Steps to Christ has been translated into more than 165 languages, making Ellen White the most translated American author of either gender. Currently she is also the world's most translated female author. *GOP 366.3* 

#### Hands That Remained Faithful to the End

Writing, writing—writing, all that writing with her right hand took its toll on Ellen White in at least one unexpected way. Her youngest granddaughter, Grace, <sup>39Evelyn</sup> Grace White-Jacques (1900-1995). recalled holding her grandmother's hand and gently rubbing the finger that was flattened by all the writing she did. Grace thought to herself, *If Grandma stopped writing so much, I wonder whether her finger would puff back up again to its normal shape.* <sup>40The personal memory story was told to James Nix by Grace White-Jacques. GOP 366 4</sup>

For more than 70 years Ellen White's right hand had been spared to write. One may wonder what the Seventh-day Adventist Church would be like today (would it even exist?) had not Ellen's hands faithfully written out the counsels God gave through her. GOP 366.5

Consider the theological crisis that threatened to divide the church in 1903. Dr. John Harvey Kellogg and his supporters were strongly urging the church to accept the doctor's pantheistic views advanced in his book *The Living Temple*. One day during Autumn Council that year, held in the M Street church in Washington, D.C., the discussion became long and passionate. Finally, late in the evening A. G. Daniells, then General Conference president, adjourned the meeting for the night. Nothing had been decided. As he walked to where he was lodging, he was accompanied by Dr. David Paulson, one of Dr. Kellogg's supporters. The two men stopped under a lamppost where they continued the discussion of the day. *GOP* 366.6

Shaking his finger at Daniells, Dr. Paulson said, "You are making the mistake ofyour life [One] of these days you will . . . find yourself rolled in the dust, and another will be leading the forces." Daniells responded, "I would rather be rolled in the dust doing what I believe in my soul to be right than to walk with princes, doing what my conscience tells me is wrong." GOP 367.1

The two men parted for the night. Entering the place where he was staying, Daniells found some letters from Ellen White that had arrived earlier that day. Writing from her home on the opposite side of the country, Ellen White warned Daniells against adopting Dr.

Kellogg's views regarding the personality of God. The next morning Daniells read to the delegates from three of Ellen White's letters. Those letters turned the tide; pantheism was rejected. *GOP* 367.2

Daniells wrote thanking Ellen White for her timely counsels that had saved the church. She responded by telling him how it happened that her letters arrived on the day they did. "Shortly before I sent the testimonies that you said arrived just in time, I had read an incident about a ship in a fog meeting an iceberg. . . ."GOP 367.3

A few nights later she dreamed of seeing the captain of a ship being suddenly warned of a huge iceberg just ahead. In her dream the lookout shouted, "Iceberg just ahead," to which an authoritative voice cried out, "Meet it!" Accelerating the ship to full steam, the captain steered the vessel straight into the iceberg. After a violent crash that broke the iceberg into many pieces, the ship, though battered, was able to sail on to its destination. *GOP* 367.4

Ellen White closed her account to Daniells by stating: GOP 367.5

Well I knew the meaning of this representation. I had my orders The time for decided action had come. I must without delay obey the command, "Meet it!" *GOP 367.6* 

This is why you received the testimony when you did. That night I was up at one o'clock, writing as fast as my hand could pass over the paper.  $^{41}$ Story based on A. L. White, 5:296-301.  $_{GOP}$  367.7

Realizing that her aging hands would soon be laying aside her pen, Ellen White wrote in 1907: "Abundant light has been given to our people in these last days. Whether or not my life is spared, my writings will constantly speak, and their work will go forward as long as time shall last." <sup>42</sup>Ellen G. White, The Writing and Sending out of the Testimonies to the Church (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press®, [1913]), 13, 14; quoted in idem, Selected Messages, 1:55. GOP 367.8

In the spring of 2015 the Smithsonian Institution, in a special issue of its magazine, included Ellen White as one of the 100 most significant Americans of all time. More than 20 years earlier (on November 4, 1993), the United States Government's National Park

Service declared Ellen White's Elmshaven home to be a National Historic Landmark, the highest designation the federal government gives to a historic site. *GOP* 367.9

Although Adventists appreciate such secular recognition, for us it is the spiritual impact that Ellen White's writings continue to have in the lives of people worldwide that is most important. Because of such ongoing life-changing influence, it is altogether proper that as a worldwide church family we pause to thank God again for Ellen White's writings and to reflect upon her legacy and what it continues to contribute to our church. GOP 368.1

July 16, 2015, marked the 100th anniversary of Ellen White's death. GOP 368.2

A century earlier on Friday afternoon, July 16, 1915, Ellen White lay dying at her Elmshaven home in northern California. Five months earlier she had broken her hip. During the months that followed she grew gradually weaker. Now she lay unconscious, her hands still, her writing all done. Several of her family and staff members had gathered around her bed, aware that her life was about to close. Seated next to her was her second-oldest grandchild, Mabel, 43Mabel Eunice White-Workman (1886-1981). lovingly holding her grandmother's hand. Somewhere Mabel had heard that sometimes, just before a person who is unconscious dies, consciousness may return momentarily. If her grandmother regained consciousness, Mabel wanted her to know that she was not alone. 44Story told by Grace White-Jacques to the author. Grace was present the afternoon her grandmother Ellen G.White died, and she watched her older half sister sitting holding their grandmother's hand. One of those hands that had done so much for others through the years was now the recipient of an expression of love from someone else who wanted to do something for her. GOP 368.3

Six years before Ellen White's death, near the close of the 1909 General Conference session, she had just finished her final sermon to the attentive delegates who were assembled from around the world. Sensing that this was probably the last time she would ever publicly address them, she thought of one more thing that she wanted to say. Picking up the Bible that was lying on the pulpit, she

held, with hands trembling from age, the holy Book out toward them and said, "Brethren and sisters, I commend unto you this Book." 45William A. Spicer, The Spirit of Prophecy in the Advent Movement (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald®, 1937), 30; quoted in A. L. White, Ellen G. White, 6:197. GOP 368.4

Ellen White then turned and walked to her seat. Those were the last words that she spoke to the world delegates at a General Conference session *GOP 368.5* 

Writing, writing, writing. Always writing. The questions that each of us must answer are these: Will we *read*? Will we *believe*? And by God's grace, will we live the counsels found in His Word—the Holy Bible—and in the inspired writings that He also gave us, through His messenger Ellen White? GOP 368.6

# Chapter 20 - Making Ellen White Relevant to Third Millennials

Dwight K. Nelson

Can the religious writings of an American female author from the agrarian nineteenth century be successfully promoted to the cosmopolitan, urbanized, and sophisticated third millennial generation today? Irrespective of her prodigious literary output, can the writings of one who wrote by the light of lanterns, who traveled by horse-drawn buggy and sleigh, by coal-burning railroad and steamship, connect with a generation of readers who in nanoseconds can interact 24/7 on-screen with both individuals and live events (financial, political, military, sports, entertainment, social, or spiritual) half a planet away? Is it even possible for this generation to find through the writings of Ellen White the inspiration to personally connect with the living Christ, to seek after a friendship with the Eternal? GOP 369.1

The questions are rhetorical, and this paper assumes their answer is yes. But the compelling question is—how? How can the writings of Ellen White be presented, promoted, packaged to a generation that has grown up with minimal or no exposure to her in either their homes or their congregations? To seek answers is the task of this paper. GOP 369.2

It has become fashionable in some circles to define generations or ideologies in terms of "modern" or "postmodern." <sup>1</sup>Art Lindsley defines these two terms: "Perhaps no two people would agree completely on any definition of 'modernism' and 'postmodernism.' Generally, though, modernism is considered to be a way of thinking that reigned in the West since the Renaissance or at least since the Enlightenment. It emphasizes such things as rationality, order, coherence, unity and power. Postmodernism is an alternative way of thinking that has come on strong only since the mid-twentieth century. Consciously rejecting its predecessor, postmodernism emphasizes emotion, diversity, and mystery, refusing to paper over the differences among people. Relativism of many kinds fits well with postmodernism" (Art Lindsley, True Truth: Defending Absolute Truth in a Relativistic World [Downers Grove, III.: IVP Books, <sup>2004</sup>], <sup>58</sup>, <sup>59</sup>). But the reality is that the differentiation this nomenclature once suggested is blurring, and the relevance of

these two terms is now questionable. What is clear for the contemporary church is that this third millennial generation—whatever they are called and however they are defined—must be reached. How can the gift of the Spirit of Prophecy become relevant to a contemporary generation of readers? *GOP* 369.3

Certainly an apologetical approach to her writings could opt for the amassing of arguments/ evidences from history, science, health, et al., that "prove" the veracity of the positions she espoused. Such "proofs" could theoretically strengthen the validity and relevancy of Ellen White to third millennials. *GOP* 369.4

But the truth is that this generation is not drawn to apologetics. Like their postmodern elders, they long ago abandoned the notion of capital-T Truth, subscribing instead to pluralism's little-t truths—i.e., "you have your truth, he has his, she hers, and I have mine—but let us live (and let live) in an uncritical circle of acceptance and toleration." Thus, against the postmodern backdrop of "there is no such thing as universal truth" (which, of course, is a self-contradicting claim), an apologetical strategy to present Ellen White to a new generation may not suffice. GOP 370.1

What if, instead, we examined the psychosocial profile of this generation, called the millennials, and sought to connect with them on the level of their own communication style and philosophical bias? GOP 370.2

#### Millennials

Consider for a moment the prevailing profile of this generation. Who are the millennials? Demographically, while there is no unanimity regarding precise dating of this generation, millennials generally are considered to be those born between the early 1980s and the mid 2000s. In the United States, encompassing as they do all those from the late teens to the middle 30s, millennials now number nearly 80 million, replacing the baby boomers as the largest single generation in this country. In fact, according to some estimates, by 2015 millennials in the United States will make up "half the workforce and by 2020 they'll make up 75 percent." 2Patrick Spenner, "Inside the Millennial Mind: The Do's and Don'ts of Marketing to this Powerful Generation." www.forbes.com/sites/patrickspenner/2014/04/16/inside-thein millennial-mind-the-dos-donts-of-marketing-to-this -powerful-generation-3/ (accessed June 17, 2014). GOP 370 3

Clearly they are already a societal force to be reckoned with—economically, socially, and certainly spiritually. Who are they? The Pew Research Center in its March 2014 study of millennials offered this profile: GOP 370.4

The millennial generation is forging a distinctive path into adulthood. Now ranging in age from 18 to 33, they are relatively unattached to organized politics and religion, linked by social media, burdened by debt, distrustful of people, in no rush to marry—and optimistic about the future. They are also America's most racially diverse generation. In all of these dimensions, they are different from today's older generations. And in many, they are also different from older adults back when they were the age millennials are now. Pew Research Center surveys show that half of millennials (50%) now describe themselves as political independents and about three in ten (29%) say they are not affiliated with any religion. These are at or near the highest levels of political and religious disaffiliation recorded for any generation in the quarter century that the Pew Research Center has been polling on these topics. 3Pew Research Center, "Millennials in Adulthood: Detached From Institutions, Networked With Friends," in www .pewsocialtrends.org/files/2014/03/2014-03-07 generationsreport-version-for-web.pdf (accessed May 20, 2014). GOP 370.5

Unattached, disaffiliated, burdened with debt, <sup>4.</sup> in no hurry to get married, and yet optimistic about their future—no wonder millennials represent the challenge they do to business, education, politics, and religion. *GOP 371.1* 

But their profile is hardly a negative one. Consider what David Burstein calls their "pragmatic idealism": "In his book Fast Future Burstein describes millennials' approach to social change as 'pragmatic idealism,' a deep desire to make the world a better place combined with an understanding that doing so requires building new institutions while working inside and outside existing institutions." 5http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Millennials (accessed May 20, 2014).

Writing for Forbes magazine, Patrick Spenner reflects on this optimism and opportunity millennials bring to the world of business and finance: *GOP 371.3* 

Everyone seems to be talking about millennials today. It's not just because they are the largest generation by population size—though that certainly doesn't hurt. It's because we're all fascinated with them—news coverage, political campaigns, and of course, marketers trying to figure out how to reach them. But beyond their size, what is it about this generation that has everyone so captivated? It's their unique sense of self (for lack of a better word), their surprisingly optimistic outlook on life (despite the harsh economic realities they face), and their less than traditional approach to life stages. <sup>6Spenner</sup> GOP 371.4

Surely this optimistic idealism is reason enough for the church to strategically reach out to and proactively interface with this generation that could become the critical key to God's endgame for this civilization. Thest we hastily conclude that millennials are only a generation of teenagers, Spenner reminds us that "most people assume that millennials are all 25-year-olds, un- or under-employed, back home in Mom and Dad's basement. But when you look at the generation holistically—as we define it, 19-36-year-olds—you see a variety of life stages and lifestyles within this group. Among the most overlooked: the fact that older millennials have, in many ways, 'grown up.' About half of older millennials are married, and about half have kids (although not necessarily the same half). When we think about millennials,

most people talk about 'when they grow up,' but what they miss is that it already happened for a lot of them—just not in the way that 'growing up' looked in the past" (lbid.). GOP 371.5

But that mission will not be easy. Activist in their mentality, diverse in their ethnicity, steeped in their technology, eclectic in their theology, morality, and sexuality—millennials arguably represent the most significant generational challenge the church has faced. GOP 371.6

So how shall we present the writings of Ellen White to this generation? How can the apocalyptic gift of the Spirit of Prophecy be attractively packaged to millennials (both within the church and the wider society) in such a way there is a connect between the gift and the generation? Is there an effective strategy for the church to invite this generation to examine the writings of this nineteenth-century woman author and to experience the divine blessing embedded within her books? *GOP 371.7* 

#### Contextualization

Consider the methodology of the apostle Paul in seeking to transmit the value of the ancient Scriptures to his own secular society. His two public addresses, first to the Asian crowd in Lystra and later to the Athenian philosophers of the Areopagus, are "the [only] two examples found in Acts of the preaching of the gospel to purely pagan audiences." 8F. F. Bruce, Commentary on the Book of Acts (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1954), 292. GOP 372.1

In both instances Paul bridges to his hearers on the level of their felt need for connection with the divine (albeit a polytheistic divine), by presenting to them a supreme divine Creator, who transcends the mythological gods of their pantheons. In Lystra he connects his audience to "the living God, who made the heavens and the earth and the sea and everything in them" (Acts 14:15). 9Unless otherwise noted, all scriptural references are from the New International Version (NIV). In Athens he bridges to "the God who made the world and everything in it . . . the Lord of heaven and earth [who] does not live in temples built by human hands" (Acts 17:24). In both cases Paul contextualizes his message in order to connect with the spiritual felt need of the audience he was seeking to reach. 10In Athens "Paul does not quote Hebrew prophecies quite unknown to his hearers; the direction quotations in this speech are quotations from Greek poets. But he does not descend to the level of his hearers by arguing from 'first principles' as one of their own philosophers might. His argument is firmly based upon the Biblical revelation of God, echoing throughout the thought, and at times the very language, of the OT scriptures. Like the Biblical revelation itself, his argument begins with God the Creator of all and ends with God the Judge of all" (Bruce, 355). GOP 372.2

With considerable detail he described his modus operandi of contextualization in his letter to the Corinthians: GOP 372.3

Though I am free and belong to no one, I have made myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am

under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings (1 Cor. 9:19-23).GOP 372.4

Paul does not advocate a dumbing down of the gospel or a watering down of the divine message. Rather he describes a contextualizing of the gospel message through the intentional strategy of identifying with the person or audience he is seeking to reach or convince. Thus Paul's contextualization was not a modification of divine revelation, but rather a translation of divine truth by speaking to his target audience in a language (sociocultural as well as linguistic) they could understand and clearly hear. For "how can they hear without someone preaching to them [in their own language]" (Rom. 10:14)?GOP 372.5

Is it possible to do the same, to contextualize the way we present or market the writings of Ellen White to our contemporary society? Can the Spirit of Prophecy be effectively presented to millennials in their sociocultural language? What would an effective contextualizing strategy for this generation look like? GOP 373.1

In order to draw a new generation into a user-friendly relationship with the writings of Ellen White, our contextualized invitation to them must include these three appeals: we must appeal to their embrace of metanarrative; we must appeal to their metaphysical longing; and, we must appeal to their high-tech methods of communication. Consider how these three appeals would dictate our modus operandi in presenting Ellen White and her writings to millennials. *GOP* 373.2

#### Millennials and Their Metanarrative

While the postmodern worldview has rejected the notion of metanarrative (a grand and overarching story explaining the past, defining the present, and suggesting the future) in favor of a plethora of localized stories (reflecting postmodernism's penchant for pluralism), the fact is that the third millennial generation has been steeped in a prevailing metanarrative from childhood. For they, with their parents, are the generation weaned on the stories of George Lucas, the mastermind behind the Star Wars metanarrative and franchise. The world knows well this collection of science-fiction tales chronicling an intergalactic struggle between the forces of good and evil. Lucas' lucrative franchise has now "sequeled" and "prequeled" this big-screen cinematic narrative nearly to death. *GOP* 373.3

But the truth is his *Star Wars* metanarrative and nomenclature have not only permeated Hollywood and the entertainment industry, but also been injected into the language of politics, literature, and even religion. William Romanowski observes: *GOP 373.4* 

Popular artists have found many ways to depict God and the supernatural realm. . . . Artists can fashion allegorical worlds that give symbolic existence to the unseen—think of C. S. Lewis's Narnia, Tolkien's Middle Earth. . . . Or look at the "world" in Star Wars. . . . By inventing imaginative worlds, artists can affirm that there is more to reality than what we experience with our senses, even though these portrayals may not match our real-life experience. 11William D. Romanowski, Eyes Wide Open: Looking for God in Popular Culture (Grand Rapids: Brazo Press, 2001), 94. GOP 373.5

Whether George Lucas set out to depict the supernatural realm or not is beside the point. What is clear is that his intergalactic tale of cosmic war between light and darkness has become a popular (and arguably prevailing) sociocultural metanarrative. And as Romanowski suggests, the imaginative *Star Wars* metanarrative can affirm to those steeped in it the notion "that there is more to reality than what we experience with our senses." *GOP* 373.6

It is that numinous recognition that can become the access point or

touchstone in an appeal to this generation to consider the writings of Ellen White. For one of the profound contributions of Ellen White and her writings to human thought is the "great controversy" metanarrative, the dramatic and inspired amplification of Holy Scripture's depiction of the internecine war that broke out in ages past in the very precincts of God's kingdom and that continues on earth today: GOP 374.1

Then war broke out in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down-that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him. Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: "Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Messiah. For the accuser of our brothers and sisters, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. They triumphed over him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death. Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short" (Rev. 12:7-12).GOP 374.2

It was this cosmic war metanarrative that Ellen White chronicled in her magnum opus, the five-volume Conflict of the Ages series. 12Denis Fortin observes: "The themes of the love of God and the great controversy between Christ and Satan are the foundational themes of Ellen White's theology. . . . It is [the theme of the love of God] that provides the context for her telling of the great controversy story and serves as a theological principle of hermeneutic to understand her writings. . . . Obviously White had a purpose in mind when she referred to the love of God at the beginning and end of her metanarrative [Conflict of the Ages series]" (Denis Fortin, "The Theology of Ellen G. White," in Denis Fortin and Jerry Moon, eds., The Ellen G. White Encyclopedia, 2nd ed. [Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald®, 2013], 265, 266). In *The Great Controversy*, the final volume of this series, Ellen White summarizes the great controversy metanarrative: *GOP 374.3* 

Through the illumination of the Holy Spirit, the scenes of the long-

continued conflict between good and evil have been opened to the writer of these pages. From time to time I have been permitted to behold the working, in different ages, of the great controversy between Christ, the Prince of life, the Author of our salvation, and Satan, the prince of evil, the author of sin, the first transgressor of God's holy law. Satan's enmity against Christ has been manifested against His followers. The same hatred of the principles of God's law, the same policy of deception, by which error is made to appear as truth, by which human laws are substituted for the law of God. and men are led to worship the creature rather than the Creator. may be traced in all the history of the past. Satan's efforts to misrepresent the character of God, to cause men to cherish a false conception of the Creator, and thus to regard Him with fear and hate rather than with love: his endeavors to set aside the divine law. leading the people to think themselves free from its requirements: and his persecution of those who dare to resist his deceptions, have been steadfastly pursued in all ages. They may be traced in the history of patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, of martyrs and reformers 13Ellen G. White, The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press®, 1911), x, xi. GOP 374 4

But as with the biblical metanarrative, Ellen White's great controversy motif is more than a recitation of sacred history. It is also the divine vehicle by which an urgent warning regarding the impending future is given to the contemporary church and world: *GOP 375.1* 

In the great final conflict, Satan will employ the same policy, manifest the same spirit, and work for the same end as in all preceding ages. That which has been, will be, except that the coming struggle will be marked with a terrible intensity such as the world has never witnessed. Satan's deceptions will be more subtle, his assaults more determined. If it were possible, he would lead astray the elect. *Mark* 13:22, R.V.GOP 375.2

As the Spirit of God has opened to my mind the great truths of His word, and the scenes of the past and the future, I have been bidden to make known to others that which has thus been revealed—to trace the history of the controversy in past ages, and especially so to present it as to shed a light on the fast-approaching struggle of

the future. . . . GOP 375.3

In these records we may see a foreshadowing of the conflict before us. Regarding them in the light of God's word, and by the illumination of His Spirit, we may see unveiled the devices of the wicked one, and the dangers which they must shun who would be found "without fault before the Lord at His coming."  $^{14 \text{lbid.}}GOP$  375.4

Is it far-fetched to attempt to bring Scripture's prevailing metanarrative to our postmodern generation? Christian philosopher Douglas Groothuis does not think so: *GOP 375.5* 

Christian theology—whether articulated in books, articles, seminary classes, Christian colleges or preaching and teaching in the local church—ought to capitalize on the postmodern fascination with narrative by speaking of God's own story in all its richness, complexity and drama. It is a drama in four principal acts: creation, fall, redemption, and consummation. But we must set forth this narrative, not as just one among many micronarratives that give meaning to disparate communities but as the cosmic Story of the Creator himself, who not only has given us the key to history in Scripture but has entered history in the incarnation for the sake of our liberation from sin and death. . . . God is the personal being who tells us the true Story and orchestrates the whole Story. <sup>15Douglas</sup> Groothuis, Truth Decay: Defending Christianity Against the Challenges of Postmodernism (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2000), 136. *GOP* 375.6

It is precisely because the contemporary generation is steeped in narrative (evidenced by the billions that are spent annually for movies on the big screen or downloaded to the little screens) that the great controversy metanarrative embedded in Ellen White's writings can yet find a fertile and significant connect with millennials and their elders *GOP* 375.7

Thus one of the strategic methods to make Ellen White relevant to this generation is to accentuate the metanarrative of the internecine cosmic conflict that she so dramatically portrays. Particularly, her five-volume Conflict of the Ages set can be marketed as a compelling retelling of the greatest stories in all of sacred literature, stories that not only depict this generation's place in history but foreshadow this generation's role in what is yet to come. We must tap into what Groothuis describes as "the prodigious and prodigal quest of postmodernism for some larger meaning beyond contingently constructed cultures." <sup>16lbid., 137.</sup> We must tell the story, and offer the writings of Ellen White as a powerful retelling of it. GOP 376.1

In fact, Ellen White herself identified *The Great Controversy* as the one book in all her writings she wished would have the largest readership: *GOP 376.2* 

The Great Controversy should be very widely circulated. It contains the story of the past, the present, and the future. In its outline of the closing scenes of this earth's history, it bears a powerful testimony in behalf of the truth. I am more anxious to see a wide circulation for this book than for any others I have written; for in The Great Controversy, the last message of warning to the world is given more distinctly than in any of my other books. <sup>17Ellen G. White, The Publishing Ministry (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald®, 1983), 358. (Italics supplied.) GOP 376.3</sup>

It is surely more than coincidental that a century later we have a generation steeped in the *Star Wars* metanarrative, a generation positioned by its proclivity for a compelling intergalactic story to be drawn to the very book Ellen White wished would receive the widest circulation of all. *GOP 376.4* 

Therefore any strategic plan to connect this generation with the writings of Ellen White must include the mass marketing and distribution of her apocalyptic classic. While it is not within the parameters of this paper to prescribe specific marketing strategies (although suggestions for packaging her writings follow below), it is clear that this woman author, who championed the metanarrative of the great controversy as the prevailing paradigm for grasping divine truth, must be promoted and presented to third millennials as one who understands their longing for story and who can effectively guide them to their place in the continuing saga of the greatest story of all. GOP 376.5

# Millennials and the Metaphysical

The Barna Group recently reported research it conducted to ascertain the spiritual profile of millennials: GOP 376.6

Much ink has been spilled in recent months over what social analysts are calling the "rise of the Nones." The trend describes the seeming surge in people who claim no faith or say they are unaffiliated with any belief system. The term rose to prominence when a Pew Research poll found that the number of Americans who are religiously unaffiliated rose to almost 20%—a nearly 5% leap in just the last five years. In the subsequent months, a Gallup poll showed similar numbers, and most recently, in March 2013, a poll from UC-Berkeley and Duke University similarly found religious affiliation in the U.S. is at its lowest point since it began to be tracked. One common thread in every survey has been the significant number of Millennials among these 18https://www.barna.org/barna-update/teens-nextgen/612-three-spiritualiourneys-of-millennials#.U35Y8fldWSp (accessed May 22, 2014).GOP 377 1

According to the Pew Research Center report on millennials, "about three in ten (29%) say they are not affiliated with any religion. These are at or near the highest levels of . . . religious disaffiliation recorded for any generation in the quarter century that the Pew Research Center has been polling on these topics." <sup>19Pew Research Center.</sup> GOP 377.2

Consider another study of this generation, this one conducted by the LifeWay Christian Resources group: "Most young adults today don't pray, don't worship and don't read the Bible, a major survey by a Christian research firm shows. If the trends continue, 'the millennial generation will see churches closing as quickly as GM dealerships,' says Thom Rainer, president of LifeWay Christian Resources. In the group's survey of 1,200 18- to 29-year-olds, 72% say they're 'really more spiritual than religious.' " <sup>20Bobby</sup> Ross Jr., "Millennials: More Spiritual Than Religious?" The Christian Chronicle, Apr. 28, 2010, at www .christianchronicle.org/article/millennials-more-spiritual-than-religious (accessed May 22, 2014). GOP 377.3

"More spiritual than religious." Increasing numbers disconnected from organized religion, yet still curious and open to spirituality, is the growing reality the church as organized religion faces in seeking to connect with the young adults of this generation. In fact, the Barna Group estimates that already 8 million once-active Christian millennials "have given up on church or Christianity." <sup>21Barna</sup> Group. GOP 377.4

And yet the choice of this generation to focus on spirituality over religion provides a significant opportunity to establish the relevancy of Ellen White and her writings for third millennials. We must connect their openness and desire for spirituality with the writings of one who arguably is the most prolific American writer on the theme of spirituality and personal spiritual growth. From her short classic, Steps to Christ, to her monumental book on the life of Jesus, The Desire of Ages, to her commentaries on His parables, Christ's Object Lessons, and the Sermon on the Mount, Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing—no other writer of her time or any subsequent generation has written more comprehensively on the themes of the love of God, the life of Christ, Calvary, conversion, Christian growth, the life of the Spirit, holiness, prayer, study of the Word of God, Christian witnessing, and faith. GOP 377.5

Her writings—devoted as they are to the hallmark quest of millennials for a deepening spir- ituality—offer a timeless connect for any generation of seekers who "hunger and thirst after righteousness" (Matt. 5:6). GOP 378.1

It is the right time for the Seventh-day Adventist Church to package and present Ellen White to the growing number of "Nones" who have rejected religion but who remain open to God and the quest to know Him. GOP 378.2

#### Millennials and Their Methods

How can the writings of Ellen White become relevant to a generation that does not read? Having pastored on a university campus for three decades, I have asked the question and I have heard it asked again and again. In reality, it is not so much a question of what this generation will read, but rather the more basic question: Does this generation read at all? GOP 378.3

As it turns out, the answer is a surprising yes. The Web site Millennial Marketing reports: GOP 378.4

Reading may not be a priority, but Millennials do spend more time reading than older generations. According to [a] fascinating interactive graphic by the New York Times, those over 64 spent by far the most time reading per day: 1 hour and 24 minutes. But 15-24-year- olds spend on average: 50 minutes a day reading and pursuing other interests. This is much higher than 25-64-year-olds, who spend just 32 minutes. <sup>22Millennial</sup> Marketing, "Do Millennials Read? Yes, But They Read Differently," at http://millennialmarketing .com/2010/05/domillennials-read-yes-but-they-read-differently/ (accessed June 17, 2014). GOP 378.5

The site also noted that a United Kingdom study has reported that news consumption has increased to "72 minutes of news a day, compared with just 60 minutes in 2006. . . . The increase was driven almost entirely by people under the age of 35." <sup>23lbid.</sup> So the notion that millennials do not read is unfounded. *GOP* 378.6

What is also clear is that millennials read differently. Millennial Marketing explains: GOP 378.7

In his book, Grown Up Digital, Don Tapscott describes Joe O'Shea, a 22-year-old student leader from Florida State who was on his way to study at Oxford. O'Shea had this to say about reading books: "I don't read books per se, I go to Google and I can absorb relevant information quickly. Some of this comes from books. But sitting down and going through a book from cover to cover doesn't make sense. It's not a good use of my time as I [can] get all the information I need faster through the web. You need to know how to

Most of us do the same, because it is the nature of high-tech reading (via the Web, a laptop computer, a smartphone, a tablet, or an electronic reader) to learn and practice the art of scanning. But is scanning for information the bane of reading in the third millennium? Tapscott sees a silver lining to this generation's resort to scanning: I believe the challenges of the Internet can actually provide the net gener [millennial] to do the hard thinking to make sense of a broader scope of information than the one that would have been available to the boomer. . . . The net gen brain may be able to execute certain perceptual tasks more rapidly, and may maintain more items in working memory. In order to deal with all that incoming information you have to be a great scanner. Digital immersion has given the net generation the visual skills that make them superior scanners. They've learned to develop the filters they need to sort out what's important from what's not. <sup>25lbid.</sup> GOP 378.9

So how does this generation's reading modus operandi inform the church's quest to assist millennials in becoming acquainted with Ellen White's writings? Recalling Paul's advocacy of contextualization to communicate the gospel to his own generation (dominantly pagan), does it not follow that we, too, must adopt the language of the people group we are seeking to reach? And if the reading "language" of millennials is highly visual and dominantly electronic, would it not be imperative for the church to embrace their modus operandi to communicate to them? GOP 379.1

The advertising group Millennial Marketing, in making their case for designing reading for millennials, quoted Jeannie, a university coed blogger: *GOP* 379.2

Even if I had the money to buy every textbook I ever needed in college, most of them would have collected dust on my shelves all semester. One could chalk it up to having a typical millennial attention span—one that understands thoughts in 140 characters or less—but just like my textbooks, I don't buy that. Part of my complete disinterest in textbooks comes from the fact that the second a book is published today, it is pretty much obsolete. Since I was in fifth grade, I have been able to access almost any

information on the Internet more quickly and accurately than I ever could in a textbook. Furthermore, this online information is free (or if it's not free, I'll go look on another site until I find it for free). With a limited budget and unlimited free resources, is there any kind of textbook that could ever capture my interest? <sup>26lbid.</sup>GOP 379.3

Up against that perspective, what kind of book would attract millennial readers? Here is how Millennial Marketing characterizes a successful millennial-friendly book: (1) it is highly visual (the text is treated as a graphic element, with big colorful pictures); (2) "the writing style was approachable, not dumbed down but meant to be interesting"; (3) the text of the book "provided just what was required, with the 'extras' provided through integrated online content" (i.e., multiple Web links included in the text connecting the reader with extra/bonus information, illustrations, material). <sup>27lbid.</sup> *GOP* 379.4

While it is not the intent of this paper to serve as a publishing primer (suggesting printing parameters or design templates for books that will attract new millennial readers), the inescapable point, however, is that in order for the church to connect Ellen White's writings with a new generation of readers, it is imperative we stylistically contextualize and graphically design our reading material to "speak" in the language of third millennials. *GOP 380.1* 

Visually, consideration should be given to a reformatting of her most influential writings, certainly the Conflict of the Ages series, beginning with The Great Controversy and The Desire of Ages. Visual reformatting in both print and e-book editions could include numerous pictorial illustrations (new artist-rendered depictions of scenes from the Bible or historical narrative. 28The Pacific Press Publishing Association's 2006 release of a New King James Version-based edition of The Desire of Ages, including contemporary pencil sketches for each chapter by Darryl Tank, is an example of visual and content reformatting to increase readership. along with current photographs of sites) and footnoted Web links for further study or background material and interactive maps. And as Millennial Marketing noted above, treating the text as a part of the graphics package (from creative font changes to break-out text or application boxes) is a millennialfriendly strategy. GOP 380.2

Audio books are popular for all ages, and a creative audio dramatization of the Conflict of the Ages series, while a major cost enterprise, could provide an attractive and effective connect with millennial readers/listeners. GOP 380.3

One of the valuable assets in the church's presentation of Ellen White and her writings to both the community of faith and the world around it are its Ellen White Web sites-www.egwwritings .org and www.ellenwhite.org. Global 24/7 accessibility to these sites is a major contributing factor in expanding the influence of her writings. However, the most compelling content in the world cannot override an outdated or antiquated graphics presentation. Having a team of spiritually committed and artistically and technologically savvy millennials to review both sites would be a major step toward achieving the interface with this generation the church seeks. While the content is fresh, the artwork and graphic layout on www.ellenwhite.org has been dated and archaic. A brief perusal of global Web sites that are attracting all ages of visitors provides sufficient cause—by way of comparison—for a major redesign of church Web sites promoting Ellen White to both the public and the church. The Web today is the most influential "best foot forward" the church possesses to connect with this generation. We must harness our brightest talent and employ our most creative Web designers to achieve a strategically successful interface between this generation and the writings of Ellen White. GOP 380.4

The persistent point is that the church must be willing to contextualize the packaging of the Spirit of Prophecy, if we are serious about reaching a new generation with the writings of Ellen White. Such a recontextualization is not a betrayal of these divinely inspired writings, but rather an obedience to the mission-driven strategy of Holy Scripture to speak in the language of the world we seek to reach for Christ (see 1 Cor. 9:19-23).GOP 380.5

#### Does It Matter?

Some years ago Kellogg's Corn Flakes came out with a clever marketing slogan in order to draw back an aging demographic market slice of consumers who had been weaned on the trademark taste of Corn Flakes but had moved on over the years to more exotic breakfast cuisine. The slogan simply invited: "Taste them again . . . for the first time." *GOP 381.1* 

But how can you do something again for the first time? You cannot, of course—but then again, you can if you are coming back for a fresh experience with something that has been part of your longago story. GOP 381.2

"Taste them again for the first time." Could that be a marketing slogan appropriate for the writings of Ellen White as well? Perhaps not only to reach the millennials, but also their parents and grandparents. Is the third millennial church populated by "grown-ups" who have concluded they have outgrown any need to read the old "red books" of their childhood? After all, who needs your grandparents' Corn Flakes for breakfast anymore? GOP 381.3

Roger Dudley and Des Cummings, Jr., researched the correlation between spiritual development and the reading of Ellen White's writings with some astounding results. <sup>29Roger</sup> L. Dudley and Des Cummings, Jr., "Who Reads Ellen White?" Ministry, October 1982, 10-12. In a survey of more than 8,200 members in 193 Adventist churches in North America, 20 categories of spiritual life were measured, including a single question whether those surveyed were regular readers of the writings of Ellen White or not. Note these stunning numbers: 82 percent of the regular readers of Ellen White's writings assessed their relationship with Jesus as "intimate," in comparison with 56 percent for the nonreaders of Ellen White (a 26 percent difference). Eighty-two percent of regular readers of Ellen White indicated a high degree of assurance of being right with God, compared to 59 percent of the nonreaders. Readers of Ellen White were 24 percent more involved in Christian outreach and service activities than were nonreaders. And 82 percent of those who read Ellen White regularly also have daily personal Bible study, compared with 47 percent of the nonreaders. In fact, in every one of

the 20 spiritual life categories surveyed, the regular readers of Ellen White scored higher than the nonreaders. *GOP 381.4* 

In their conclusion Dudley and Cummings wrote: GOP 381.5

Seldom does a research study find the evidence so heavily weighted toward one conclusion. In the church growth survey, on every single item that deals with personal attitudes or practices [of spiritual life], the member who regularly studies Ellen White's books tends to rank higher than does the member who reads them only occasionally or never. 30lbid., 12.GOP 381.6

"Taste them again for the first time." Because it is vital for the church to implement creative strategies to introduce the writings of Ellen White to those who have yet to read her; and because it is just as imperative for the church to recontextualize those writings for those who no longer read her. GOP 381.7

"Taste them again for the first time." That was Jesus' point about prophets, was it not? "By their fruit you will recognize them" (*Matt. 7:16*). No wonder He calls us to taste them again, and again. GOP 382.1

### Summary

Can this generation connect with Ellen White and her writings? Can the disparity and distance between them and her become negligible? It is the conclusion of this paper that the answer is yes. But it is a qualified yes. Our mission to connect with this generation must include the proviso that some methodologies will have to change. There is more truth than poetry to the quip "Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results." GOP 382.2

Given this generation's propensity for and familiarity with a great-controversy-like metanarrative, given their penchant for the metaphysical of spirituality over organized religion, given their preference for highly graphic and high-interactive media over "old-fashioned" textbook-style reading—it is imperative that the third millennial church embrace a third millennial contextualization in our quest to introduce millennials to this woman and her writings that can lead them to Jesus. Many of us are convinced there is no writer more Christocentric and more divinely positioned to connect with this generation than the woman whose writings we still call a manifestation of the Spirit of Prophecy. It is high time we invite an entire generation to "taste them again for the first time." GOP 382.3

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# Appendix A

# The Gift of Prophecy in the Fundamental Doctrines of Seventh-day Adventists

Compiled in the Office of the Ellen G. White Estate July 2015

# 1872 — XVI —

That the Spirit of God was promised to manifest itself in the church through certain gifts, enumerated especially in 1 Cor. 12 and Eph. 4, that these gifts are not designed to supersede, or take the place of, the Bible, which is sufficient to make us wise unto salvation, any more than the Bible can take the place of the Holy Spirit; that in specifying the various channels of its operation, that Spirit has simply made provision for its own existence and presence with the people of God to the end of time, to lead to an understanding of that word which it had inspired, to convince of sin, and work a transformation in the heart and life; and that those who deny to the Spirit its place and operation, do plainly deny that part of the Bible which assigns to it this work and position. 1[Uriah Smith], A Declaration of the Fundamental Principles Taught and Practiced by the Seventh-day Adventists (Battle Creek, Mich.: Steam Press of the Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, 1872), 5, art. XVI. See also "Fundamental Principles," Signs of the Times, June 4, 1874, 3. GOP 385.1

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XIX. That the Spirit of God was promised to manifest itself in the church through certain gifts, enumerated especially in 1 Cor. 12 and Eph. 4; that these gifts are not designed to supersede, or take the place of, the Bible, which is sufficient to make us wise unto salvation, any more than the Bible can take the place of the Holy Spirit; that, in specifying the various channels of its operation, that Spirit has simply made provision for its own existence and presence with the people of God to the end of time, to lead to an understanding of that word which it had inspired, to convince of sin, and to work a transformation in the heart and life; and that those who deny to the Spirit its place and operation, do plainly deny that part of the Bible which assigns to it this work and position. 2Fundamental Principles of Seventh-day Adventists, Word of Truth Series, no. 5 (Battle Creek, Mich.: [Review and. Herald], 1897, 3, 4. GOP 385.2

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19. That God has placed in His church the gifts of the Holy Spirit, as enumerated in *1 Corinthians 12* and *Ephesians 4*. That these gifts operate in harmony with the divine principles of the Bible, and are given for the perfecting of the saints, the work of the ministry, the edifying of the body of Christ. *Rev. 12:17*; *19:10*; *1 Cor. 1:5-7*. 3Fundamental Principles of Seventh-day Adventists, Words of Truth Series, no. 5 (Battle Creek, Mich.: [Review and Herald], 1897), 3, 4; Uriah Smith, "Fundamental Principles of Seventh-day Adventists," Advent Review and Sabbath Herald, Aug. 22, 1912, 4. GOP 386 1

# 1980 17. The Gift of Prophecy

One of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is prophecy. This gift is an identifying mark of the remnant church and was manifested in the ministry of Ellen G. White. As the Lord's messenger, her writings are a continuing and authoritative source of truth which provide for the church comfort, guidance, instruction, and correction. They also make clear that the Bible is the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested. (*Joel 2:28*, *29*; *Acts 2:14-21*; *Heb. 1:1-3*; *Rev. 12:17*; *19:10*. ) 4"Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists—Church Manual Revision," Adventist Review, May 1, 1980, 25, 26. GOP 386.2

# 2005 18. The Gift of Prophecy

One of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is prophecy. This gift is an identifying mark of the remnant church and was manifested in the ministry of Ellen G. White. As the Lord's messenger, her writings are a continuing and authoritative source of truth which provide for the church comfort, guidance, instruction, and correction. They also make clear that the Bible is the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested. (*Joel 2:28*, *29*; *Acts 2:14-21*; *Heb. 1:1-3*; *Rev. 12:17*; *19:10*.) <sup>5Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual, revised 2005, 17th ed. (Silver Spring, Md.: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2005), 15. *GOP 386 3*</sup>

### 2015 18. The Gift of Prophecy

The Scriptures testify that one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is prophecy. This gift is an identifying mark of the remnant church and we believe it was manifested in the ministry of Ellen G.White. Her writings speak with prophetic authority and provide comfort, guidance, instruction, and correction to the church. They also make clear that the Bible is the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested. (*Num.* 12:6; 2 Chron. 20:20; Amos 3:7; Joel 2:28, 29; Acts 2:14-21; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17; Heb. 1:1-3; Rev. 12:17; 19:10; 22:8, 9.) 6"Session Actions," Adventist Review, July 8, 2015, 46 GOP 386.4

# **Appendix B**

**Affirmations of Confidence in the Spirit of Prophecy** 

Official Actions of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

Compiled in the Office of the Ellen G. White Estate July 2015

# **Appendix B**

**Affirmations of Confidence in the Spirit of Prophecy** 

Official Actions of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

Compiled in the Office of the Ellen G. White Estate July 2015

# 1867 Spiritual Gifts

Resolved, That we express our continued faith in the perpetuity of spiritual gifts during the gospel dispensation, and our gratitude to God that he has intimately connected the spirit of prophecy with the proclamation of the third angel's message. <sup>1"Business Proceedings</sup> of the Fifth Annual Session of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists," Review and Herald (hereafter RH), May 28, 1867, 284. *GOP* 388.1

### 1869 Spiritual Gifts

Resolved, That our faith and confidence in the gifts of the Spirit of God, so graciously vouchsafed to us in these last days, are not only unskaken [sic] by the attacks of the opposers of the truth, but greatly strengthened and increased by the warnings we have received in times of danger, the counsels and admonitions when we have erred, and the comfort in our afflictions; as well as by the purity of their teachings, and the respect and reverence they produce for the word of God. And we earnestly recommend to all the scattered flock a more careful reading of, and more strict compliance with, the Testimonies to the Church. <sup>2"Business</sup> Proceedings of the Fifth Annual Session of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists," RH, May 25, 1869, 173. GOP 388 2

# 1870 Spiritual Gifts

Whereas, We as a people have held the doctrine of the perpetuity of spiritual gifts and professed to believe that 'the spirit of prophecy' was manifested among us as "the remnant" (Rev. 12:17; 19:10), GOP 389.1

And whereas, Our faith on this subject has been, to a very great extent, a merely nominal or dead faith, as the following facts bear witness: GOP 389.2

- 1. The Testimonies of the Spirit have faithfully warned against the spirit of worldliness and selfishness, yet very many of the persons professing to believe the Testimonies have manifested this spirit in their lives. GOP 389.3
- 2. The Testimonies have spoken most pointedly of the danger arising from the licentious tendencies of the age, and of the necessity of purity of heart and life, yet we have had a most deplorable case of depravity developed by a minister and in a church professing also to believe the warnings. GOP 389.4
- 3. The Testimonies have, from time to time, warned of the danger of pursuing certain courses of action by those having charge of, or laboring in, the Review Office for several years past; yet those in the Office where these Testimonies were published, and whence they were sent forth, have, in many important particulars, pursued exactly the course against which they were warned, thereby contradicting their profession and wounding the cause; therefore, GOP 389.5

Resolved, That we will humble ourselves before God for these things, and endeavor to so walk in harmony with the teachings of the Spirit, as no longer to present such inconsistency in our lives, and to grieve God's Spirit away from us. GOP 389.6

And whereas, in these things we have seen that those who disregard these Testimonies, whether in private or public life, have shown themselves to be lamentably weak in judgment, and have wounded themselves and the cause by their unfaithfulness; therefore, GOP 389.7

Resolved, That we recognize the wisdom of God in the "Testimonies to the Church," and that it is dangerous and destructive to disregard or neglect their instructions; and we confess our weakness and inability to carry on this sacred work to divine acceptance, without their aid. <sup>3</sup>"Business Proceedings of the Eighth Annual Session of the General Conference of S. D. Adventists," RH, Mar. 22, 1870, 109. GOP 389.8

Resolved, That we re-affirm our abiding confidence in the Testimonies of Sr. White to the church, as the teaching of the Spirit of God, and that we have each year continual and growing evidence that they are such. <sup>4</sup>"Business Proceedings of the Ninth Annual Session of the General Conference of S. D. Adventists," RH, Feb. 14, 1871, 68. GOP 389.9

Resolved, That our confidence is increased in the gift of the Spirit of prophecy which God has so mercifully placed in the third angel's message; and that we will endeavor to maintain an affectionate regard for its presence and its teachings; and we hereby request our Executive Committee to prepare or cause to be prepared a work giving our reasons for believing the testimonies of Sister White to be the teachings of the Holy Spirit. <sup>5"Business Proceedings of the</sup> Twelfth Annual Meeting of the S. D. A. General Conference," RH, Nov. 25, 1873, 190. GOP 390.1

Resolved, That we hereby express our continued conviction that we are largely indebted to the gift of prophecy, as manifested through Sister White, for the harmony and unity which this people enjoy. 6"Sixteenth Annual Session of the General Conference of S. D. Adventists," RH, Oct. 4, 1877, 105. GOP 390.2

Whereas, The subject of spiritual gifts is one of importance, and such works as the Spirit of Prophecy, and the Testimonies should be in the hands of all our brethren, therefore GOP 390.3

Resolved, That we recommend the various tract societies to make a special effort to place them in the library of each church, and in the hands of scattered brethren, and that they encourage the reading of them. And further GOP 390.4

Resolved, That where these works are used as above stated, we offer them at one-half the retail price, and that the difference between this and the regular wholesale price be paid from the fund raised for circulating these works, said fund to be increased from \$1000, as at first started, to \$5000. 7"Seventeenth Annual Session of the General Conference of S. D. Adventists," RH, Oct. 24, 1878, 129. GOP 390.5

Whereas, Our past experience has fully proved that our prosperity as a people is always in proportion to the degree of confidence we cherish in the work of the spirit of prophecy in our midst; and GOP 390.6

Whereas, The most bitter opposition we have to meet is aimed against this work, showing that our enemies realize its importance, whether we do or not: and GOP 390.7

Whereas, We have found that the most effectual way to meet and disarm this opposition was either to secure the personal labors of the one through whom we believe that the Lord has spoken, or to freely circulate her writings, and GOP 390.8

Whereas, Great light has shone upon us through this channel, which not only our own people greatly need, but which would be a blessing to the world, remove prejudice, and break the force of the bitter attacks of the enemies of the truth; therefore *GOP 391.1* 

Resolved, That we urge upon our ministers and tract societies the importance of making earnest efforts to extend the circulation of the volumes of the Spirit of Prophecy and the Testimonies to the Church among our own people, till these shall be in every family of believers. GOP 391.2

Resolved, That we recommend the Publishing Association to issue, in attractive form such of her writings as would be of general interest to the reading public who are not of our faith, to be placed in public libraries, reading rooms, on shipboard, etc., by canvassers and T. and M. workers, where they, as well as our other standard works, may be accessible to the people. GOP 391.3

Resolved, That we recommend the Publishing Association to issue in as cheap a form as consistent, the matter substantially contained in volume two of Spiritual Gifts, concerning the early life and labors of Sister White, in connection with the rise and progress of this work, for the special use of our ministers in new fields, and among those first becoming acquainted with her connection with this cause. And we further recommend the publication of a small edition

of her earliest writings, now out of print, to bring all her writings within reach of those anxious to obtain them. GOP 391.4

Resolved, That we consider it to be the duty of all our ministers to teach the Scriptural view of the gift of prophecy among our brethren everywhere, and the relation it sustains to the work of God in which we are engaged. GOP 391.5

Resolved, That we advise that efforts be made to complete the raising of the fund of \$5,000 voted at the last annual session of the Conference for the purpose of increasing the circulation of these writings; said fund to be used in placing them in public libraries, reading-rooms, and other locations where they will be open to the reading public, and in such of the families of the very poor as the officers of the T. and M. Society decide should have them. <sup>8"The</sup> Conference," RH, Dec. 4, 1879, 184. GOP 391 6

Whereas, We recognize the manifestation of spiritual gifts, especially the spirit of prophecy, as one of the distinguishing features of the work of the third angel's message, and—GOP 391.7

Whereas, We fully believe that the neglect of these gifts, and of the special instruction given us through them, will surely result in a decline of spirituality and true godliness among us as a people; therefore—*GOP* 391.8

Resolved, That we urgently recommend to all our ministers that they frequently present before our brethren, in our older churches as well as among those more recently brought to the faith, the plain teaching of the Scriptures concerning the perpetuity of these gifts, and the great importance of carefully heeding the precious instruction given us through this agency. <sup>9"General Conference," RH, Dec. 20, 1881, 392. GOP 391.9</sup>

Resolved, That we express our unabated confidence in the Testimonies which have been so graciously given to this people, which have guided our ways and corrected our errors, from the rise of the third angel's message to the present time; and that we especially express our gratitude for Testimony No. 31, which we accept as a token of the care of God over us,—an evidence that he has not forsaken us, notwithstanding our many backslidings. 10"General Conference," RH, Dec. 26, 1882, 787. GOP 392 1

Whereas, It is exceedingly important that the special instruction to ministers and other workers, which is contained in the four volumes of the "Testimonies," be carefully and constantly studied by all laborers in the field; and—*GOP* 392.2

Whereas, It is impossible for many who are traveling to carry with them more than one volume at a time: therefore—*GOP* 392.3

Resolved, That we hereby ask the General Conference Committee to arrange for the preparation of a manual composed of extracts from the "Testimonies" concerning how to present the truth, consecration, manner of life, habits of study, etc., of ministers and missionary workers. <sup>11</sup>"General Conference Proceedings," RH, Nov. 30, 1886, 744. GOP 392.4

Whereas, The Spirit of God has spoken directly of "the American Sentinel and its mission," saying, "The Sentinel is like a trumpet giving a certain sound; and all our people should read it carefully, and then send it to some relative or friend, thus putting to the best use the light God has given them"; and, "Let every worker for God comprehend the situation, and place the Sentinel before our churches, explaining its contents, and urging home the facts and warnings it contains"; therefore, GOP 392.5

Resolved, That we urge our brethren to give careful attention to this important matter, and accordingly to give the American Sentinel the widest possible circulation that may be given by the means and facilities which are or may be placed in our hands. <sup>12"General</sup> Conference Proceedings," General Conference Daily Bulletin (hereafter GCB), Nov. 1, 1889, 129. GOP 392.6

Resolved, That we urge upon all our people the importance of a practical adoption of correct principles in diet, dress, and other habits of life which are taught in the Bible and the "Testimonies," and also the recent work "Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene." <sup>13</sup>"General Conference Proceedings," GCB, Mar. 25, 1891, <sup>237</sup>·GOP 392.7

# 1926 Circulating Mrs. E. G. White's Books

Whereas, Twenty years have passed since word came to us through Sister White regarding her books, stating: 'Instruction has been given me that the important books containing the light that God has given regarding Satan's apostasy in heaven should be given a wide circulation just now, for through them the truth will reach many minds.' In view of this instruction and of the good results we have seen where it has been followed, GOP 393.1

We recommend, That our publishing house boards and field leaders give careful consideration to the question of giving a much wider circulation to Sister White's books than has been done in the past. 14"Twenty-fourth Meeting," RH, June 9, 1926, 4<sub>GOP 393.2</sub>

## 1936 "Testimonies for the Church"

Whereas, The church is today facing the perils of the last days, days especially marked by the deceptions and delusions of the enemy of souls; and, GOP 393.3

Whereas, The Lord has, through the Spirit of prophecy, sent to the remnant church messages that clearly reveal the snares and delusions that endanger spiritual life; and, GOP 393.4

Whereas, These messages uphold the high standard of Christian living in these days of apostasy and prevailing iniquity, and magnify the importance of Bible study, prayer, Christian service, and faith in Christ, thus tending to fortify the soul against specious temptation and delusion; and, Whereas, With the passing of the years, the death of the pioneer workers, and the accession of thousands of new believers, there is danger that, like Israel of old, we shall forget the providential way in which the Lord has and instructed us; therefore, GOP 393.5

We recommend, That all workers in every branch of denominational activity give special emphasis to the importance of individual study of, and obedience to, the instruction in the writings of the Spirit of prophecy, as a vital factor in the preparation of heart for the impending crisis before the world and the church, for more efficient preparation for soul-saving service, and for a preparation for the coming of our Lord. We further, GOP 393.6

Recommend, That while encouraging the circulation of the E. G. White books generally, every possible effort be put forth to make available, to our people who do not already have them in their homes, the counsels and admonitions especially addressed to church members: GOP 393.7

- 1. By urging the securing and faithful study of the instruction to workers and church members in the nine-volume set of "Testimonies of the Church," *GOP* 393.8
- 2. By calling special attention of our church members to the recently published "Selections From the Testimonies," issued in three books, to bring within the easy reach of all in inexpensive form those

portions of the "Testimonies" most essential to each church member in fitting him for daily living and Christian service. GOP 394.1

3. By calling the special attention of our non-English-reading church members to the books of the Spirit of prophecy to be obtained in the various languages.  $^{15\rm ``Proceedings"}$  of the General Conference," RH, June 18, 1936, 280, 281.  $_{GOP\ 394.2}$ 

# 1946 The Spirit of Prophecy

We recommend, That the following statement be approved and sent to the believers in the advent message throughout the world: GOP 394.3

Two outstanding characteristics of Seventh-day Adventists are the teachings regarding the perpetuity of the law of God, including the Sabbath commandment, and the manifestation of the Spirit of prophecy in the church. Bible prophecy especially mentions these features as reasons for the wrath of the dragon against the remnant church. (*Rev.* 12:17; 19:10; 14:12.) A hundred years having passed since the beginning of this movement; we appreciate more and more the great blessing of Sabbath keeping as a memorial of God's power in creation and redemption, and as a test of faith and loyalty. And we increasingly recognize the great value of the Spirit of prophecy which has been given to the church for counsel, reproof, admonition, encouragement and guidance. *GOP* 394.4

Again and again down through the centuries God has sent chosen messengers to call His people to higher levels of spiritual life, and to urge them to greater efforts for the salvation of the lost. Such visitations have been especially marked in times of crisis. *GOP* 394.5

"God hath set some in the church," including prophets "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." 1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11-13.GOP 394.6

The apostle Paul seems to emphasize especially the need of these spiritual gifts in the remnant church, for he writes: "So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ" 1 Cor. 1:7.GOP 394.7

True messengers of God do not seek for such responsibilities. They are not self-appointed, neither are they chosen by the church. (1 Peter 1:21; Heb. 5:4.) It was during a time tension and confusion of religious thought, after the great disappointment regarding the

coming of the Lord in 1844, that God chose a timid maiden of seventeen to bring to His people messages of courage and quidance. The supernatural manifestations in the visions of Ellen Harmon, her clear Biblical teachings, the rebuke of fanaticism, the power of God attending the presentation of the messages, and her practical instruction regarding such subjects as publishing the message and church organization convinced those sober pioneers that her messages were from God. And through her seventy years of service in this cause, Ellen White's teachings, oral and written, always exalting Christ and calling the church to a deeper spiritual experience, had a tremendous influence in molding the work of the advent movement. Aside from her devotional messages and her vivid portrayal of the agelong conflict between good and evil, she gave instruction regarding the development of all departments of an ever-expanding work-methods of evangelism, the science of health and the establishment of medical institutions, a system of Christian education, the conduct of a great religious publishing business, and other lines for which she personally had no special aptitude or human preparation. And, significantly, what she has written regarding the science of healing, the principles of education. and the salesmanship of religious literature has been recognized by high authorities in medical science, education, and publishing, as scientifically correct and as advanced thinking along these lines.GOP 394.8

Some years after Mrs. White's death a president of the General Conference epitomized the value of her writings as follows: 'The fruit of these writings is such as to reveal that their origin is of God. They lead to the most perfect standard of morality. They discountenance every vice, and exhort to the practice of every virtue. They point out the perils through which we are to pass on our way to the kingdom. They reveal the devices of Satan. They warn us against his snares. They have protected us from fanatical and unreasonable men and movements. They have exposed hidden iniquity, and have brought to light concealed wrongs, laying bare the evil motives of the false-hearted. They have repeatedly aroused the church to greater consecration to God and to more zealous efforts for the salvation of the lost and erring.' Since Mrs. White's death her writings have had an ever-increasing influence in the church and also among those not of this faith. Though her pen has

been laid aside and her voice stilled, the Lord yet speaks to His people through these writings and will continue to speak to the end of the journey. GOP 395.1

Although these messages were given through the manifestation of the gift of prophecy, neither Mrs. White nor the church has ever regarded them as a substitute for the Holy Scriptures; but rather as instruction, warnings, and admonitions for the guidance of the church during the perils of the last days. Concerning this matter Mrs. White said in her first published booklet: *GOP* 395.2

"I recommend to you, dear reader, the Word of God as the rule of your faith and practice. By that Word we are to be judged. God has, in that Word, promised to give visions in the last days, not for a new rule of faith, but for the comfort of His people, and to correct those who err from Bible truth."— *Christian Experience and Views* (1851), p. 64. Nor did she ever lose sight of the proper relationship of her writings to the Word of God. Late in her experience the servant of the Lord in "An Open Letter" addressed to "All Who Love the Blessed Hope," in speaking of her writings stated that: "Little heed is given to the Bible, and the Lord has given a lesser light to lead men and women to the greater light."— *Review and Herald*, January 26, 1903. GOP 395.3

In an official statement the pioneers of this movement, meeting in a general conference in 1855, expressed absolute confidence in the revelations through Mrs. White and also made very plain the attitude of the church on their relation to the Bible as follows: GOP 395.4

"Nor do we, as some contend, exalt these gifts or their manifestations, above the Bible; on the contrary, we test them by the Bible, making it the great rule of judgment in all things; so that whatever is not in accordance with it, in its spirit and its teachings, we unhesitatingly reject. But as we cannot believe that a fountain sends forth at the same time sweet water and bitter, or that an evil tree brings forth good fruit, so we cannot believe that that is of the enemy which tends to unite the hearts of the saints, to lead to meekness and humility and holy living, and incites to deep heart searching before God, and a confession of our wrongs."—Report of

Neither Sister White nor the church has ever claimed verbal inspiration for her writings. She said: "Although I am as dependent upon the Spirit of the Lord in writing my views as I am in receiving them, yet the words I employ in describing what I have seen are my own, unless they be those spoken to me by an angel, which I always in close [sic] in marks of quotation."— Review and Herald, October 8, 1867. And this devoted servant of God in a personal letter addressed to the President of the General Conference expressed her own humility and carefulness in the sacred work committed to her in the following: GOP 396.2

"I walk with trembling before God. I know not how to speak or trace with pen the large subjects of the atoning sacrifice. I know not how to present subjects in the living power in which they stand before me. I tremble for fear lest I shall belittle the great plan of salvation by cheap words. I bow my soul in awe and reverence before God, and say, 'Who is sufficient for these things?' "— The Spirit of Prophecy in the Advent Movement, p. 44.GOP 396.3

As indicated in the prophetic word (*Rev. 12:17*) the gift of prophecy as manifested in the remnant church is a special object of Satan's attack. There have been attacks against the work of Mrs. White from the beginning until now, especially from those who have apostatized from the church. Most of the attacks have been mere puerile quibblings by those who have rejected admonitions from the Spirit of prophecy concerning their wrong course of action. That there may be honest questionings in the minds of some, we freely admit. There are even some things in the Holy Scriptures, as the apostle Peter said, that are "hard to be understood." (*2 Peter 3:16.*) It would be strange indeed if there were not found among the thousands of pages that have come to us through the Spirit of prophecy some things difficult to comprehend, especially by those far removed from the circumstances under which some of the messages were given. *GOP 396.4* 

Jesus said, "Ye shall know them by their fruits." After all, it is the results of the manifestation of the Spirit of prophecy among us which constitute the test of the validity of this gift. The harmony of

the writings of Mrs. White with the Holy Scriptures, the fruits of repentance and holy living manifested in the lives of those who read and follow these teachings and the example of Mrs. White's noble life of service, are evidences of the genuineness of her messages, which for one hundred years have successfully stood every test applied by friends and foes. When she died a well-known magazine summed up her life and works in these words:

"She was absolutely honest in her belief in her revelations. Her life was worthy of them. She showed no spiritual pride, and she sought no filthy lucre. She lived the life and did the work of a worthy prophetess."— *The Independent* (New York), August 23, 1915. GOP 396.6

As delegates to the forty-fifth session of the General Conference at Takoma Park, Washington, D. C., U.S.A., in June 1946, we are happy to express to the constituency of the advent movement throughout the world field our unbounded confidence in the gift of the Spirit of prophecy, which has been manifested among us from the beginning. *GOP* 397.1

We heartily commend to you, dear fellow believers, the writings which have come to us through the Spirit of prophecy, and urge a prayerful study of these Heaven-sent messages, presenting clearly the way of entrance into a life of fellowship with God and how to render acceptable service in soul winning and giving counsel regarding the conduct of the work of the church in the critical period just ahead. *GOP* 397.2

"Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe His prophets, so shall ye prosper." <sup>16</sup>"Proceedings of the General Conference," RH, June 14, 1946, 201-203. GOP 397.3

# 1954 The Spirit of Prophecy

Whereas, We recognize that in the early days of the remnant church there was given to it the gift of the Spirit of prophecy, and through this gift by voice and pen during the life of Ellen G. White and through her writings since her death, we have been counseled, guided, and led to higher plans of spiritual experience, to higher standards, and to a clear concept of coming events, and GOP 397.4

Whereas, We recognize that the principles set forth in the Spirit of prophecy writings do not change with the passage of the years, that "time and trial have not made void the instruction given," and "the instruction that was given in the early days of the message is to be held as safe instruction to follow in these its closing days" (R & H, July 18, 1907), and GOP 397.5

Whereas, We recognize the value of the Spirit of prophecy messages to the church throughout the world and that the principles enunciated by the servant of the Lord in Europe, Australasia, and North America are of equal value to the church in all lands in fostering Bible standards, encouraging the spirit of devotion and sacrifice, and guarding and unifying the church, therefore be it GOP 397.6

## Resolved: 1. That we reaffirm our fundamental belief: GOP 397.7

- a. That God has placed in His church the gifts of the Holy Spirit and that these gifts, operating in harmony with the divine principles of the Bible, are given for the perfecting of the saints, the work of the ministry, the edifying of the body of Christ, and that the gift of prophecy, one of the identifying marks of the remnant church, was manifested in the life and ministry of Ellen G. White. *GOP* 397.8
- b. That the writings of Mrs. E. G. White were given to the church, not as a substitute for the Holy Scriptures, nor as a new rule of faith, but for the spiritual uplift of the church, for instruction, for warning, for reproof, for admonition, for illumination of doctrine, and for the special guidance of God's people through these perilous last days. GOP 397.9
- 2. a. That we call our church members throughout the world to a

- diligent study of the Spirit of prophecy writings as they may be available in their languages and to a practical application in the individual lives and work of the church. *GOP* 398.1
- b. That we encourage all overseas fields to hasten the publication of the Spirit of prophecy books. We commend the course now being followed in many fields in developing the "Introductory Spirit of Prophecy Library," to be followed by other of the books as circumstances may indicate. *GOP* 398.2
- c. That we encourage our administrators, evangelists, and pastors to provide for the adequate presentation of the doctrine of the Spirit of prophecy and its value and place in the church, at our large gatherings, in our evangelistic meetings, and in our local churches, and that the annual Spirit of Prophecy Sabbath be observed. GOP 398.3
- d. That we urge our church members to build a Spirit of prophecy library in their homes, thus making readily available to all members of the family the timely and helpful "counsels, warnings, and reproofs," so much needed in these perilous days. *GOP* 398.4
- 3. a. That as the truth presented in the E. G. White books written for circulation among that general public "is light needed to arouse the people to prepare for the great day of God, which is just before us and these books contain God's direct appeal to the people" (MS 23, 1890), we encourage every Seventh-day Adventist to join in the wide dissemination of these inspired books and particularly during 1954 in giving an unprecedented circulation to The Great Controversy with its vital message, placing the special one-dollar missionary edition in English in as many homes as possible. *GOP* 398.5
- b. That we call our colporteur evangelists to a renewed effort to distribute the message-filled Spirit of prophecy subscription books. *GOP* 398.6
- c. That we urge the publishers of the E. G. White subscription books in English to hasten the completion of the work of making the five volumes of the Conflict of Ages Series, in its entirety, available for colporteur sale, taking such steps as may be necessary to

furnish to the world the inspired volumes presenting the whole Bible story either in the single volumes or in the form of the popular Treasures of Life Series. *GOP* 398.7

4. That we express appreciation to the publishers of the E. G. White books in North America for the steps they have taken in issuing no less than twenty-one of these volumes in the inexpensive, convenient form of the Christian Home Library, and GOP 398.8

We recommend, That as rapidly as consistent with publishing procedures the list of Spirit of prophecy books in this form be extended, thus assuring an ever-widening distribution of these volumes, which are of inestimable value to the church. 17"Proceedings of the General Conference," RH, June 6, 1954, 267GOP 398.9

# 1962 Resolution on Spirit of Prophecy

[Following is a resolution that was voted at the General Conference session Friday, August 3, 1962. We did not get it into the published bulletin, and are therefore asking that it be published in this issue of the REVIEW.—W. R. Beach.] GOP 399.1

Whereas, The Lord through the Spirit of Prophecy has spoken to His church in these last days "to bring the minds of His people to His word" (*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 663); to impart to us a clearer understanding of future events and our mission and destiny as a people; to call attention to Bible "principles for the formation of correct habits of living" (*Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 663, 664); "for the comfort of His people" (*Early Writings*, p. 78); and to prepare us to meet the Lord; and *GOP* 399.2

Whereas, The Spirit of Prophecy counsels have been given to build unity in God's church and to cause His people to "see eye to eye and be of the same mind" (*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 361); "to correct specious errors and to specify what is truth"— *E. G. White* letter 117, 1910; and to "confirm the faith of His people "in the position they have taken" (*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 41); and *GOP* 399.3

Whereas, The experience of the years has taught us the wisdom of these counsels—wisdom that is sorely needed as we enter the last days of conflict, when the people preparing for the second advent of their Lord need the special guidance God has so graciously provided; therefore GOP 399.4

Resolved, that we express to God our deep-felt gratitude for the gracious provisions He has made in the Spirit of Prophecy writings for the protection and guidance of His church, and further GOP 399.5

We recommend, 1. That church members throughout the world be urged to study carefully and give earnest heed to the Spirit of Prophecy counsels. GOP 399.6

2. That they be encouraged to continue to build Spirit of Prophecy libraries in their homes that they might have at hand the wealth of

- 3. That a special effort be made to encourage the purchase and use of E. G. White books that offer instruction in soul-winning work and guidance to the church in its last final effort to win men to God's kingdom. *GOP* 399.8
- 4. That we call to the attention of Seventh-day Adventists, and especially new members, the sound knowledge concerning the Spirit of Prophecy which may be theirs as the result of pursuing courses of study, such as the Prophetic Guidance Correspondence Course, and that our pastors be encouraged to conduct Prophetic Guidance schools periodically in their local churches. *GOP* 399.9
- 5. That pastors and church officers be encouraged to continue their observance of Spirit of Prophecy Sabbath each year, devoting the preaching hour of the Sabbath to a consideration of this theme. *GOP* 399.10
- 6. That we earnestly urge our brethren in overseas areas: *GOP* 399.11
- a To press forward with unabated zeal in the excellent work of translating and publishing the Spirit of Prophecy books in the languages of their constituencies; GOP 399.12
- b. To take full advantage of the newly designed "Spirit of Prophecy Book of the Year" plan which makes available to all English-reading members one basic E. G. White book each year at a greatly reduced price; GOP 399.13
- c. To participate heartily in the newly designed plan for making the English editions of the E. G. White books available to workers at prices within their purchasing power, capitalizing on the great potential of the English-reading ability of many of our overseas workers. GOP 400.1
- d. To promote Prophetic Guidance courses in their languages. *GOP* 400.2
- 7. That church members in all lands be reminded that it is

increasingly essential that the writings be studied in their proper context in the E. G. White books. GOP 400.3

- 8. That we encourage workers and laity to avail themselves of the new three volume *Comprehensive Index to the Writings of Ellen G.* White which will serve as a most valuable aid in the study of the Spirit of Prophecy counsels. *GOP* 400.4
- 9. That the leaders of our publishing work, and literature evangelists throughout the world, be encouraged to undertake, with an increasing sense of the time in which we live, the ever-widening distribution of the subscription editions of the Spirit of Prophecy books that are designed to enlighten the world concerning the times in which we live, and the dramatic issues just before us. <sup>18\*Resolution</sup> on the Spirit of Prophecy," RH, Sept. 27, 1962, 17. GOP 400.5

# 1966 Spirit of Prophecy Writings

Past experience has proven that to a great degree our prosperity as a people has been in proportion to the confidence we have in the Spirit of Prophecy. When we inform ourselves concerning the counsels given, accept and follow them, we prosper; when we neglect them, we suffer. We therefore *GOP 400.6* 

- Resolve: 1. To express our thanks to God for the instruction, counsel, warnings, and reproof which He in His mercy has given to us through the testimonies of His Spirit, and show our appreciation of these messages by humbling our hearts before Him, and letting these messages bear full fruit in our lives. GOP 400.7
- 2. To urge our pastors and church officers everywhere to hold before our people the importance of earnestly studying the inspired counsel given to the church, encouraging them to accept the practical Christian instruction received from these counsels as guiding principles for daily living. GOP 400.8
- 3. To encourage the observance of an annual Spirit of Prophecy Emphasis Week in our Seventh-day Adventist educational institutions. *GOP* 400.9
- 4. To encourage our division leaders to continue to plan for more Spirit of Prophecy volumes to be translated into other languages for our growing world membership. GOP 400.10
- 5. To encourage our evangelists, pastors, and lay preachers to make extensive use of Spirit of Prophecy books in their soul-winning endeavors, gift award programs, and follow-up ministry. *GOP* 400.11
- 6. To continue to make use of the Prophetic Guidance Correspondence Course, especially among new believers; and that in major language areas, where the course is not available, to take steps to translate these lessons for such areas. *GOP 400.12*
- 7. To encourage those engaged in literature production and sales to continue to give the message-filled E. G. White books their rightful place in the circulation of Seventh-day Adventist literature.

19"Resolution: <i>401.1</i>	Spirit	of	Prophecy	Writings,"	RH,	June	30,	1966,	10,	<sup>11</sup> GOP

# 1970 The Spirit of Prophecy

Whereas, We recognize that the strength and security of God's people accrues from Heaven- given instruction as God has spoken through the prophets' messages recorded in the Scriptures, we dedicate our hearts to an earnest study of the Bible making it the man of our counsel. GOP 401.2

Whereas, God in His providence and in harmony with the promise of His Word has placed in the church of the remnant the gift of the Spirit of Prophecy for the "comfort of His people, and to correct those who err from Bible truth" (*Early Writings*, page 78), and *GOP* 401.3

Whereas, This gift as manifested in the life and work of Ellen G. White "to bring the minds of His people to His word" (*Testimonies*, vol. 5, page 663) and to instruct concerning "the course that He would have them pursue" (*ibid.*, page 661) provides safe guidance in difficult times; supplies windows through which we may view the future; gives protection from the wiles of the evil one; instructs concerning God's will; furnishes sound guidance for the functioning of the many lines of the work of the church; and causes God's people to "see eye to eye and be of the same mind" (*ibid.*, vol. 3, page 361), thus providing the church and its members with a unique and definite advantage, and *GOP 401.4* 

Whereas, As families and churches had united in a renewed thoughtful, prayerful study of the Spirit of Prophecy counsels, especially as found in the *Testimonies for the Church* there has been evidenced the special leading and marked blessing of God, and GOP 401.5

Whereas, We recognize that the reformation and revival for which the church longs and seeks cannot take place in its fullness until all the means God employs to purify His church and prepare His people for the events of the last days and for translation are fully appreciated and acted upon, therefore, GOP 401.6

Resolved, 1. That we place on record our humble but sincere words of gratitude for this gift, recognizing the great blessing it has been and is to us, and declare the disposition of our hearts to receive,

accept, and follow it. That we earnestly appeal to our members throughout the world to recall God's special providential leading by means of the Spirit of Prophecy through the years of our history and avail themselves of information concerning this gift in the church in its world outreach and thoughtfully and prayerfully judge by the "weight of evidence" (*ibid.*, vol. 5, page 675). *GOP 401.7* 

- 2. That we encourage throughout the world concerted study programs utilizing the Spirit of Prophecy books available to our members, and that we GOP 401.8
- a. Concentrate on study of the *Testimony* counsels by continuing and broadening the coverage with the Testimony Countdown program where the *Testimonies* in the nine volumes are available. *GOP 401.9*
- b. Encourage the divisions in areas where the nine-volume set of *Testimonies to the Church* are not available to launch into this unique study plan utilizing the three-volume Testimony Treasures in English and other languages in which it is available; or the more compact Counsels for the Church in areas where these, in one or more volumes, serve. *GOP 402.1*
- c. Suggest that the study of the *Testimonies* be followed by concerted study of *Christ in His Sanctuary* and other of the Ellen G. White books, for many of which study guides are available. *GOP* 402.2
- 3. That sensing the lateness of the hour, and the vital importance of a sound understanding of the place of the Spirit of Prophecy in the Seventh-day Adventist Church we intensify our efforts to inform all members, especially the youth and those new in the faith, concerning the place and operation of the gift, utilizing publications available and especially "The Prophetic Guidance Correspondence Course." *GOP 402.3*
- 4. That we call upon the world divisions of the church to accelerate their efforts to make the Spirit of Prophecy counsels available to our members in vernacular languages, making use of approved, innovative, and inexpensive methods to reach this goal. In lands with few Ellen G. White messages available, study should be given

to ways and means for providing the compact but comprehensive grouping of Spirit of Prophecy materials in *Counsels for the Church*. GOP 402.4

- 5. That we urge all divisions to give careful study to the selection of key individuals who give promise of ability and enthusiasm to give promotion to the Spirit of Prophecy in our churches and institutions. *GOP* 402.5
- 6. That throughout the world field special efforts be undertaken to present the Spirit of Prophecy in an interesting, helpful, and relevant way to the youth of the Advent Movement through such means as an annual Spirit of Prophecy Emphasis Week observed in all Seventh-day Adventist schools, and in the issuance of appropriate Spirit of Prophecy materials, and materials designed to inform and instruct concerning this important gift in the church. GOP 402.6
- 7. That we encourage the White Estate, the Department of Education, and the Ministerial As-sociation to press on in the development of aids for the presentation and teaching of the Spirit of Prophecy in our schools, our churches, and evangelistic meetings. GOP 402.7
- 8. That we call upon our publishing forces in the production and marketing of literature distributed by colporteurs to continue to emphasize the sale of the Heaven-inspired volumes such as *The Great Controversy, Patriarchs and Prophets, The Desire of Ages* and *Christ's Object Lessons* from the pen of Ellen G. White. *GOP* 402.8
- 9. That in these times of rapid change and crumbling standards, with the questioning of long established Bible-based positions both in doctrine and in manner of life, attested to by the Spirit of Prophecy, we call upon all Seventh-day Adventists to recognize that while there are areas in which principle is not involved and change is acceptable and even desirable, there are truths and standards which are not negotiable, that what "was truth" in the early days "is truth today" (Selected Messages, book 2, p. 104), and that the standards God has set and especially called to our attention in preparing a people for translation are the standards by which He will in the day of reckoning judge the character and determine the

# 1975 The Spirit of Prophecy

For more than a century, succeeding sessions of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists have affirmed the abiding confidence of the remnant church in, and continued for, the gift of the Spirit of Prophecy manifested in the writings of Ellen G. White. GOP 403.1

Ninety years have now passed since Ellen G. White came in 1885 to visit the emerging church in Europe. Today, the world session of the General Conference meets for the first time on this continent. On July 16, 1915, her tireless pen was laid down and her entreating voice stilled. Thus 60 years have already elapsed since she spoke and wrote as the Lord's messenger. Times have changed since Sister White wrote her inspired counsel from the United States, Europe, and Australia. The world of the past quarter of the twentieth century is a very different one from that which existed at the turn of the century. However, in reading the books, testimonies, and articles written by Mrs. White—now increasingly available also in non-English languages—we discover a quality of timelessness, and we sense that her writings come to grips in a realistic and contemporary way with the issues confronting God's people at this time. *GOP 403.2* 

The fundamental principles set forth in the Spirit of Prophecy writings do not shift back and forth with the passage of time. The teachings and instructions given in the early days of this movement are safe counsel to follow in these its latter days. Though the Advent Movement has now spread out from North America and Europe to the ends of the earth and is truly a worldwide family of believers, as delegates coming from all continents and scores of lands we recognize that the principles so vigorously and so clearly enunciated by Sister White apply, with equal value and consistency, to God's church around the globe. These writings lift up Christ and His Word, foster Biblical doctrines and standards, encourage personal piety, devotion and sacrifice, spiritual and physical health, church unity and effectual methods of work, provide a clearer understanding of our times and coming events, and offer needed warnings, admonitions, and reproof. GOP 403.3

Recommended, 1. To record that we, the delegates attending the 52nd session of the General Conference, as did the delegates attending the fifth session in 1867, express our gratitude to God for the perpetuity of spiritual gifts during the gospel dispensation, and for the Spirit of Prophecy that means so much more to the remnant church in these last days. GOP 403.4

2.In order to more fully understand the Scriptures and God's purposes for His people, to call upon all Seventh-day Adventists throughout the world to prayerfully study these writings, together with the Scriptures, for the spiritual uplift and guidance they provide in daily life and in preparation for the Second Advent. "Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper" (2 Chron. 20:20).GOP 403.5

It was further.

Recommended, To adopt the following proposals concerning the Spirit of Prophecy writings: GOP 404.1

- 1. That editors of our church papers regularly draw the attention of the church members to the need and privilege of reading the writings of the Spirit of Prophecy with a view to preparing a people to meet their coming Lord. *GOP 404.2*
- 2. That all church members, and especially those whose training and profession bring them in close contact with the scholarly and academic worlds, be made still more aware of the value of the writings of Sister White by greater familiarity with those concepts that are receiving increasing scientific corroboration. *GOP 404.3*
- 3. That our church and institutional administrators, in their leadership roles, give even more careful heed than heretofore to the counsel received through the Spirit of Prophecy. GOP 404.4
- 4. That special plans for the purchase of Ellen G. White books by denominational workers be continued and promoted; as well as plans to continue offering to our members the lowest prices possible at camp meetings and other special meetings. GOP 404.5
- 5. That the Spirit of Prophecy committees in the overseas divisions should, with the support of the E. G. White Estate, the publishing

houses, and the various conference organizations, take an interest in having the major writings translated and published, even in the language areas where the membership is small. GOP 404.6

6. That students and workers be encouraged to make active use of the rich research materials being gathered at the E. G. White SDA Research Centers established in different parts of the world. This will facilitate and stimulate useful research and keep alive and strengthen confidence in the Ellen G. White writings, especially among the younger generation. <sup>21</sup>"Final Report of the Plans Committee," RH, Aug. 7-14, 1975, 8. GOP 404 7

#### 1980 Prophetic Guidance for the Church

*Voted*, To adopt the following statement on prophetic guidance for the remnant church. *GOP 404.8* 

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has, from the time of its formative years, accepted as normative the teaching concerning spiritual gifts as set forth in the Pauline writings (1 Cor. 12; Eph. 4), recognizing that these gifts were not intended to be confined to any one period but were given to edify the church from the apostolic era to the end of time. GOP 404.9

The church has recognized further that from among those gifts the gift of prophecy has been bestowed in a special way, for the blessing of the church, being manifest in our midst in late 1844 when Ellen Gould Harmon, who later became Mrs. White, was called to be God's messenger. From that time to the present the Lord has, through this means, continued to provide guidance and counsel for His people. GOP 404.10

The influence of this prophetic gift has been such that it has leavened every aspect of the church's development and life: (1) counseling and undergirding the efforts of leaders as they organized the church, (2) confirming its basic Biblical teachings, (3) planning for world mission expansion, (4) giving expression to guiding principles in the operation of publishing, medical, and educational institutions, and (5) contributing to the edification of the church and its members in devotional life and Christian service. No phase of the life of the church has been without the influence of this teaching gift, and it is evident that the church could not have developed its distinctive character and grown to its present proportions without it. GOP 404.11

This broad spectrum of counsel, written under the influence of God's Spirit, is pertinent to help meet the challenges to the total well-being and the very existence of the church in these last days. Faithfully observed, these counsels will be of value in uplifting Jesus Christ as the only way of salvation, in confirming doctrine and prophetic truths for this time, in encouraging revival and reform, and in warning against error and fanaticism. Especially pertinent is the

clarion call of God to His people to seek a spiritual preparation to meet their Lord as they take to the world God's last messages of Revelation 14 and Revelation 18.*GOP 405.1* 

We, the delegates to the fifty-third session of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, reaffirm our confidence in the prophetic guidance so graciously provided by the unfailing Word of God and the counsels from the pen of Ellen G. White. <sup>22"Session</sup> Actions," Adventist Review (hereafter AR), May 1, 1980, 19. GOP 405.2

# 1985 Spirit of Prophecy Statement- 1985 General Conference Session

*Voted*, to adopt the following statement regarding the Spirit of Prophecy: *GOP 405.3* 

We today express our deep gratitude to God for the continuing presence of spiritual gifts among His people, and particularly for the gift of prophecy as manifested in the life and writings of Ellen G. White. *GOP* 405.4

We praise and thank God (1) for the fact that this gift points unerringly to Christ's great sacrifice for the sins of the world, and for its tender and moving appeals that lead and draw us to His cross and to Him as our substitute and surety, (2) for the unparalleled influence of this gift in exalting the Scriptures as the standard for character, the revealer of doctrines, and the test of experience, (3) for the aid this gift has provided, and continues to provide, in helping us to understand God's eternal purposes and the certain working out of His will in the great struggle between good and evil, and (4) for the instruction, counsel, warnings, and reproof provided through this gift, and for its decisive influence in guiding the church through the years and in creating and maintaining the remarkable organizational and doctrinal unity of the church. GOP 405.5

In the light of these considerations, GOP 405.6

We urge church administrators, church pastors, and other leaders by precept and example to encourage church members to study earnestly the inspired counsels and follow carefully the practical instruction and principles for daily living that these counsels contain. GOP 405.7

We call upon evangelists, pastors, and lay preachers to make extensive use of the Ellen G. White books in their soul-winning endeavors. *GOP* 406.1

We call upon our education directors, school administrators, and teachers in our educational institutions by precept and example to encourage students to study the Ellen G. White books and the other rich, inspired materials available in the Ellen G. White-SDA

#### Research Centers. GOP 406.2

We urge administrators, physicians, nurses, and other workers in our health-care facilities to study and honor Ellen G. White's counsels as they relate to the operation of our medical institutions.  $GOP\ 406.3$ 

We encourage non-English-language divisions to continue the well-established program of translating the Ellen G. White books into their various languages. *GOP* 406.4

We urge all union and local conferences and missions to give careful study to the selection and appointment of persons with ability and enthusiasm to promote the writings of Ellen G. White in the churches and institutions within their territories. GOP 406.5

We urge our publishing houses to translate and publish the Ellen G. White books, and we encourage our literature evangelists and church members everywhere to give these volumes wide circulation. *GOP* 406.6

We encourage our publishing houses, where feasible, to translate and publish the new six- volume Ellen G. White biography, and we urge ministers and church members to read the volumes and to note carefully "the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history" (*Life Sketches*, p. 196). <sup>23\*Session Actions," AR, July 7, 1985, 8, 9. GOP 406 7</sup>

# 1990 Resolution on Spirit of Prophecy- 1990 General Conference Session

Voted, To approve the statement Resolution on Spirit of Prophecy —1990 General Conference Session as follows: *GOP 406.8* 

Ever since 1867, resolutions of gratitude to God for the rich spiritual gifts that He has bestowed on His church have been voted at General Conference sessions. Among the leading gifts for which the church has given thanks has been His Inspired Word. Today, when Satan is seeking to deceive, if possible, even "the very elect," we give continued thanks to God for the guidance given to us through Him in the Holy Scriptures. The "sure word of prophecy" is indeed "a light that shineth in a dark place" (2 Peter 1:19). GOP 406.9

"In His Word, God has committed to men the knowledge necessary for salvation. The Holy Scriptures are to be accepted as an authoritative, infallible revelation of His will. They are the standard of character, the revealer of doctrines, and the test of experience" (*The Great Controversy*, p. vii). GOP 406.10

We are grateful to God not only for giving us the Holy Scriptures but also for giving us the last-day manifestation of the gift of prophecy in the life and work of Ellen G. White. Her inspired writings have been invaluable to the church throughout the world in countless ways—exalting the Bible as the inspired word of God; encouraging Bible study; establishing the faith of God's people in its promises; promoting a spirit of devotion and sacrifice; aiding in the development and organization of an international body of believers; expanding world outreach; providing guiding principles for the operation of publishing, medical, and educational institutions; and guarding and unifying the church. GOP 406.11

Above all, her writings point to Christ's great sacrifice on the cross, which leads people to become citizens of the kingdom of grace that His atonement has made possible and which prepares them to meet the Saviour in peace at His second advent. As a result of the blessings that have accrued when we have followed inspired counsel, we have learned how wise and practical is the instruction

that has come to us through inspiration. GOP 407.1

Now we have reached a most interesting and significant moment in history when much of the counsel on health, temperance, and other topics given us long ago has been supported by science and become popular with the general public. This challenges us to renewed study of and fuller appreciation for the extensive body of counsel entrusted by God to the remnant church. We believe the time is here to take the fullest advantage of this inestimable treasure of truth given for our guidance. *GOP 407.2* 

In the past, General Conferences in session have voted recommendations that urged wider translation, distribution, and use of the writings of Ellen G. White. We, the delegates to the fifty-fifth General Conference session, wish to affirm and give added emphasis to these recommendations. But, more important, we reaffirm our acceptance of this counsel from God and commit ourselves to live by the principles contained in it. We pray that God will pour out His Holy Spirit in latter-rain power on the church, thus hastening the glorious day of our Lord's return. <sup>24</sup> Resolution on Spirit of Prophecy—1990 Genera Conference Session," AR, July 26-Aug. 2, 1990, 6, 7. *GOP 407.3* 

#### 1995 Statement of Confidence in the Spirit of Prophecy

*Voted*, To approve the Statement of Confidence in the Spirit of Prophecy, as follows: *GOP 407.4* 

We, the delegates assembled in Utrecht for the 56th session of the General Conference, express praise and thanksgiving to God for His gracious gift of the Spirit of Prophecy. *GOP* 407.5

In Revelation 12, John the revelator identifies the church in the last days as the "remnant, . . . which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" (verse 17). We believe that in this brief prophetic picture the revelator is describing the Seventh-day Adventist Church, which not only keeps "the commandments of God" but has "the testimony of Jesus Christ," which is "the spirit of prophecy" (Revelation 19:10). GOP 407.6

In the life and ministry of Ellen G. White (1827-1915), we see God's promise fulfilled to provide the remnant church with the "spirit of prophecy." Although Ellen G. White did not claim the title "prophet," we believe she did the work of a prophet, and more. She said: "My commission embraces the work of a prophet, but it does not end there" (*Selected Messages*, Book One, p. 36); "If others call me by that name [prophetess], I have no controversy with them" (ibid., p. 34); "My work includes much more than this name signifies. I regard myself as a messenger, entrusted by the Lord with messages for His people" (*ibid.*, p. 36). GOP 407.7

Ellen G. White's chief burden was to direct attention to the Holy Scriptures. She wrote: "Little heed is given to the Bible, and the Lord has given a lesser light to lead men and women to the greater light" (*Review and Herald*, January 20, 1903). She believed that although her writings are a "lesser light," they are light, and that the source of this light is God. *GOP 408.1* 

As Seventh-day Adventists, we believe that "in His Word God has committed to men the knowledge necessary for salvation. The Holy Scriptures are to be accepted as an authoritative, infallible revelation of His will. They are the standard of character, the revealer of doctrines, and the test of experience" (*The Great Controversy*, p. 7). We consider the biblical canon closed. However,

we also believe, as did Ellen G. White's contemporaries, that her writings carry divine authority, both for godly living and for doctrine. Therefore,  $GOP\ 408.2$ 

We recommend, (1) That as a church we seek the power of the Holy Spirit to apply to our lives more fully the inspired counsel contained in the writings of Ellen G. White, and (2) That we make increased efforts to publish and circulate these writings throughout the world. <sup>25</sup>"Session Actions," AR, July 3, 1995, 30.<sub>GOP</sub> 408.3

# 2000 Resolution on the Gift of Prophecy Through the Ministry of Ellen G. White

*Voted*, To adopt the Resolution on the Gift of Prophecy Through the Ministry of Ellen G. White, as follows: *GOP 408.4* 

Resolution on the Gift of Prophecy Through the Ministry of Ellen G. White GOP 408.5

For more than six thousand years the cosmic conflict between Christ and Satan has raged throughout the universe. By both human and supernatural means Satan has continued the conflict that began in heaven millenniums ago. Consumed by hatred toward Christ, he has confused the vast majority of earth's population concerning the nature of God. Instead of showing Him to be a God of love whose law is a transcript of His character, Satan has caricatured Him in a variety of ways, including as a tyrant who demands an impossible level of obedience and an indulgent Deity who cares little whether His law is obeyed. GOP 408.6

Throughout past centuries God has endeavored to set forth the truth about Himself. Through patriarchs and prophets, through nature and written revelation, through human experience and divine providences He has countered Satan's deceptions and distortions. Ultimately, He sent His only begotten Son into the world that through His life, ministry, and death the world could see that God is love and would be drawn to Him. *GOP* 408.7

Almost two millenniums have passed since Jesus returned to heaven. All the great time prophecies of the Bible have been fulfilled. The final conflict in the controversy between righteousness and sin is rapidly approaching. "Intensity is taking possession of every earthly element" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 257). *GOP 409.1* 

In light of these considerations, GOP 409.2

1. We express thanks to God for the instruction, counsel, warnings, and reproofs that, in His mercy, He has given us through the writings of Ellen G. White and we desire to show our appreciation for these messages by humbling our hearts before Him and letting these messages bear full fruit in our lives. *GOP* 409.3

- 2. We urge that efforts be intensified to inform all church members, especially the youth and those new to our faith, concerning the role and value of this gift in the experience of Seventh-day Adventists. We also encourage increased circulation of the Ellen G. White books as well as concerted study programs throughout the world utilizing those Ellen G. White books available to our members. GOP 409.4
- 3. We urge church administrators, pastors, educators, and lay leaders, by precept and example, to encourage all our people to study and follow the practical instruction and principles for daily living contained in these inspired counsels. *GOP* 409.5
- 4. We urge all church administrators, including those of educational and health-care institutions, to give careful heed to the inspired counsels given to Seventh-day Adventists through the writings of Ellen G. White GOP 409.6
- 5. We encourage every church to conduct an annual Spirit of Prophecy Day, and we urge schools to conduct a yearly Adventist Heritage Week. *GOP 409.7*

In order to make Ellen G. White's published writings more available to the church, *GOP 409.8* 

- 1. We recommend the continuation and promotion of special purchase incentives for denominational employees to acquire Ellen G. White's published writings, as well as the continuation of offering to members the lowest possible prices for these "message-filled" books at camp meetings and other special times. GOP 409.9
- 2. We encourage the church's publishing houses and Adventist Book Centers to feature Ellen G. White's books prominently in their advertisements and displays. GOP 409.10
- 3. We express appreciation to the world divisions and their publishing houses for the 237 translations of Ellen G. White books authorized during the past quinquennium, and call upon the divisions of the church to continue availing themselves of the subsidies available from the General Conference for translating the Ellen G. White books into local languages. Further, we encourage

making use of approved, innovative, and inexpensive methods, including electronic format, to reach that objective. GOP 409.11

4. We encourage our publishing houses, where feasible, to translate the landmark volume, *Messenger of the Lord*, and we urge church members and employees to read the volume and take particular note "of the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history" (*Life Sketches*, p. 196). *GOP 409.12* 

In recognition of recent activities of the Ellen G. White Estate, GOP 409.13

We express appreciation to the Ellen G. White Estate for its CD-ROM products, including the recently released interactive CD-ROM, Legacy of Light. We also express appreciation for its efforts to provide Ellen G. White's published writings, plus pertinent and accurate information regarding those writings and her ministry, through its official Web site. We urge that the Web site's information be provided in languages other than English, and that it be kept current regarding issues of interest and concern to church members. <sup>26</sup> Session Actions," AR, July 4, 2000, 11. *GOP 410.1* 

#### 2005 Resolution on the Spirit of Prophecy

*Voted*, To approve the Resolution on the Spirit of Prophecy, which reads as follows: *GOP 410.2* 

#### Resolution on the Spirit of Prophecy

As delegates to the 2005 General Conference Session in St. Louis, Missouri, we acknowledge that the Seventh-day Adventist Church has been richly blessed by the Lord through the gift of prophecy manifested in the ministry and writings of Ellen G. White. Through it the Lord guided the development of the Church from a small number of members to a worldwide movement entrusted with the proclamation of a message of salvation in Christ and the hope of His soon return in glory. Her ministry has directly contributed to the preservation of the unity of the Church and has sustained it in difficult times. Her writings continue to be a most positive influence in the life of the Church, providing for it comfort, guidance, instruction, correction, and theological stimulus. Their study will constantly lead the Church back to the Bible as the very foundation of faith and practice. *GOP 410.3* 

As delegates, we affirm the important role the writings of Ellen G. White still play in nurturing the Adventist movement and in preserving the unity of the world Church. Consequently, we call upon Seventh-day Adventists throughout the world to prayerfully study her writings, in order to understand more fully God's purpose for His remnant people. We call upon church leaders at all administration levels to plan and facilitate the promotion and study of the writings of the Spirit of Prophecy in their respective fields. We call upon our youth to acquaint themselves with the wealth of divine counsel found in these writings because it will greatly enrich their lives as they serve the Lord and fellow human beings. <sup>27</sup> Session Actions," AR, July 5, 2005, 27, 28. GOP 410.4

# 2010 143-10GS Resolution on the Spirit of Prophecy as manifested in the ministry and writings of Ellen G. White

*Voted*, To approve the Resolution on the Spirit of Prophecy as Manifested in the Ministry and Writings of Ellen G. White, which reads as follows: *GOP 411.1* 

Resolution on the Spirit of Prophecy as manifested in the ministry and writings of Ellen G. White GOP 411.2

We, the delegates to the 2010 General Conference Session in Atlanta, Georgia, acknowledge with gratitude the continuing contribution to the Seventh-day Adventist Church found in the writings and ministry of Ellen G. White. We are witnesses to how the Church has been blessed and guided by God through the inspired counsel of His messenger. Her counsels exalt the Bible as the Word of God, lift up Jesus as Creator and Redeemer of the world, and encourage a life of service and sacrifice. Her ministry has directly aided in the preservation of unity in the Church and its expanding global outreach. *GOP 411.3* 

The gift of prophecy, like the other spiritual gifts, is to bring about unity, equip God's people for the work of ministry, build up the body of Christ, protect it from being deceived by false doctrine, and foster individual and collective spiritual growth (*Ephesians 4:11-15*). We recognize in Ellen G. White the gift of prophecy, and affirm that as this gift is valued and its instruction heeded, the Church prospers. *GOP 411.4* 

Consequently, we express our gratitude to God for His gracious gift in the prophetic ministry of Ellen G. White. We call upon Seventh-day Adventists everywhere to prayerfully study her messages and benefit from the inspiration and instruction found there. We encourage the teachers and administrators of our educational institutions and the leaders of our health-care facilities and publishing houses to review her counsels for their areas of service. We urge pastors to make use of these writings in their sermon preparation and in their planning with the members for the mission of their churches. We appeal to Church administrators at every level to exert their influence in affirming the importance of these writings

for the Church and to continue efforts to make these writings available to church members at affordable cost. And we affirm our commitment to "believe His prophets" (2 *Chronicles 20:20*), that we may prosper in fulfilling our mission to the world and thus hasten the coming of Jesus. <sup>28</sup>"Session Actions," AR, July 1, 2010, 27 GOP 411.5

## 2015 Statement of Confidence in the Writings of Ellen G White

As delegates to the 2015 General Conference Session in San Antonio, Texas, we express our deep gratitude to God for the continuing presence of the various spiritual gifts among His people (1 Cor 12:4-11; Eph 4:11-14), and particularly for the prophetic guidance we have received through the life and ministry of Ellen G White (1827-1915). GOP 411.6

On the centennial of her death, we rejoice that her writings have been made available around the globe in many languages and in a variety of printed and electronic formats. GOP 412.1

We reaffirm our conviction that her writings are divinely inspired, truly Christ-centered, and Bible-based. Rather than replacing the Bible, they uplift the normative character of Scripture and correct inaccurate interpretations of it derived from tradition, human reason, personal experience, and modern culture. *GOP 412.2* 

We commit ourselves to study the writings of Ellen G White prayerfully and with hearts willing to follow the counsels and instructions we find there. Whether individually, in the family, in small groups, in the classroom, or in the church, a combined study of the Bible and her writings provide a transforming and faith-uplifting experience. *GOP 412.3* 

We encourage the continued development of both worldwide and local strategies to foster the circulation of her writings inside and outside the church. The study of these writings is a powerful means to strengthen and prepare His people for the glorious appearing of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. <sup>29</sup> "Ninth Business Meeting Session Action," AR, July 10, 2015, 42. GOP 412.4

# **Appendix C**

The Inspiration and Authority of the Ellen G. White Writings <sup>1Published in</sup> Adventist Review, Dec. 23, 1982, 9; and Ministry, February 1983, 24.

## A Statement of Present Understanding

In response to requests, a statement on the relationship of the writings of Ellen G. White to the Bible was prepared initially by an ad hoc committee of the General Conference. The statement was published in the July 15 [1982] Adventist Review and August [1982] issue of Ministry with an invitation to readers to respond to it. Suggestions from readers and from several groups have led to a refinement of the statement to its present form. Although it is not a voted statement, we believe that the worldwide participation in its development makes it a reflection of the views of the church on the topic it addresses.—Biblical Research Institute.

In the Statement of Fundamental Beliefs voted by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists at Dallas in April 1980 the Preamble states: "Seventh-day Adventists accept the Bible as their only creed and hold certain fundamental beliefs to be the teaching of the Holy Scriptures." Belief 1 reflects the church's understanding of the inspiration and authority of the Scriptures, while belief 17 reflects the church's understanding of the writings of Ellen White in relation to the Scriptures. These read as follows: GOP 413.1

#### 1. The Holy Scriptures

The Holy Scriptures, Old and New Testaments, are the written Word of God, given by divine inspiration through holy men of God who spoke and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. In this Word, God has committed to man the knowledge necessary for salvation. The Holy Scriptures are the infallible revelation of His will. They are the standard of character, the test of experience, the authoritative revealer of doctrines, and the trustworthy record of God's acts in history. (2 Peter 1:20, 21; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17; Ps. 119:105; Prov. 30:5, 6; Isa. 8:20; John 17:17; 1 Thess. 2:13; Heb. 4:12.) GOP 413.2

## 17. The Gift of Prophecy

One of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is prophecy. This gift is an identifying mark of the remnant church and was manifested in the ministry of Ellen G. White. As the Lord's messenger, her writings are a continuing and authoritative source of truth which provide for the church comfort, guidance, instruction, and correction. They also make clear that the Bible is the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested. (Joel 2:28, 29; Acts 2:14-21; Heb. 1:1-3; Rev. 12:17; 19:10.) GOP 414.1

The following affirmations and denials speak to the issues that have been raised about the inspiration and authority of the Ellen White writings and their relation to the Bible. These clarifications should be taken as a whole. They are an attempt to express the present understanding of Seventh-day Adventists. They are not to be construed as a substitute for, or a part of, the two doctrinal statements quoted above. *GOP 414.2* 

#### **Affirmations**

- 1. We believe that Scripture is the divinely revealed Word of God and is inspired by the Holy Spirit. *GOP 414.3*
- 2. We believe that the canon of Scripture is composed only of the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments. *GOP 414.4*
- 3. We believe that Scripture is the foundation of faith and the final authority in all matters of doctrine and practice. *GOP 414.5*
- 4. We believe that Scripture is the Word of God in human language. GOP 414.6
- 5. We believe that Scripture teaches that the gift of prophecy will be manifest in the Christian church after New Testament times. *GOP* 414.7
- 6. We believe that the ministry and writings of Ellen White were a manifestation of the gift of prophecy. *GOP 414.8*
- 7. We believe that Ellen White was inspired by the Holy Spirit and that her writings, the product of that inspiration, are applicable and authoritative, especially to Seventh-day Adventists. *GOP 414.9*
- 8. We believe that the purposes of the Ellen White writings include guidance in understanding the teaching of Scripture and application of these teachings, with prophetic urgency, to the spiritual and moral life. GOP 414.10
- 9. We believe that the acceptance of the prophetic gift of Ellen White is important to the nurture and unity of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. *GOP 414.11*
- 10.We believe that Ellen White's use of literary sources and assistants finds parallels in some of the writings of the Bible. *GOP* 414.12

#### Denials

- 1. We do not believe that the quality or degree of inspiration in the writings of Ellen White is different from that of Scripture. GOP 414.13
- 2. We do not believe that the writings of Ellen White are an addition to the canon of Sacred Scripture. GOP 414.14
- 3. We do not believe that the writings of Ellen White function as the foundation and final authority of Christian faith as does Scripture. GOP 415.1
- 4. We do not believe that the writings of Ellen White may be used as the basis of doctrine. *GOP 415.2*
- 5. We do not believe that the study of the writings of Ellen White may be used to replace the study of Scripture. GOP 415.3
- 6. We do not believe that Scripture can be understood only through the writings of Ellen White. *GOP 415.4*
- 7. We do not believe that the writings of Ellen White exhaust the meaning of Scripture. *GOP 415.5*
- 8. We do not believe that the writings of Ellen White are essential for the proclamation of the truths of Scripture to society at large. GOP 415.6
- 9. We do not believe that the writings of Ellen White are the product of mere Christian piety. *GOP 415.7*
- 10. We do not believe that Ellen White's use of literary sources and assistants negates the inspiration of her writings. *GOP 415.8*

We conclude, therefore, that a correct understanding of the inspiration and authority of the writings of Ellen White will avoid two extremes: (1) regarding these writings as functioning on a canonical level identical with Scripture, or (2) considering them as ordinary Christian literature. *GOP 415.9* 

# **Appendix D**

"Believe His Prophets"—Why I Accept Ellen G. White's Prophetic Ministry, Sermon, Gift of Prophecy Symposium, October 17, 2015

Ted N. C. Wilson President of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

"Believe in the Lord your God, and you shall be established; believe His prophets, and you shall prosper" (2 Chron. 20:20)}<sup>1Unless</sup> otherwise noted, Bible texts are from the New King James Version.

"Surely the Lord God does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7).

#### **Challenges of the Last Days**

As we face the last days of earth's history, we know there will be a determined effort by Satan to destroy the effectiveness of the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. We see the neutralization of God's authoritative Word all around us. The historical-critical method applied to the Word of God reduces its effectiveness as authoritative. It is Satan's plan to undermine God's plain "Thus saith the Lord." We have seen and are seeing determined efforts on the part of individuals motivated by Satan to attack the Spirit of Prophecy and make it "of none effect." The Word of God and the Spirit of Prophecy both are products of heavenly inspiration and are thus accurate accounts describing the great controversy between good and evil—between Christ and Satan. This is why the devil is determined to destroy the truth found in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. Thankfully, the devil will not succeed! However, in the process many people will be deceived. GOP 416.1

God has given us a mandate from heaven to be defenders of God's Word because it has been shown to be true and changes people's lives. We are to lead people back to the true worship of God, as the first angel of Revelation 14 emphasizes. It is our privilege to affirm God's wonderful truth through our witness and proclamation. We are to believe God's prophets and share the news that God reveals His secret messages to His appointed prophets and servants. GOP 416.2

In the Seventh-day Adventist Church we accept Ellen G. White as a modern servant of the Lord and as a prophet. This church would not be where it is without the special guidance given it by God through Ellen White in the writings of the Spirit of Prophecy. The counsel given will help finish God's work on this earth through the power of the Holy Spirit. It is precisely why the devil is so intent on destroying the influence of the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. *GOP 417.1* 

In Selected Messages, book 2, page 78, we read: GOP 417.2

The very last deception of Satan will be to make of none effect the testimony of the Spirit of God. . . . Satan will work ingeniously, in different ways and through different agencies, to unsettle the

confidence of God's remnant people in the true testimony. He will bring in spurious visions to mislead, and will mingle the false with the true, and so disgust people that they will regard everything that bears the name of visions as a species of fanaticism; but honest souls, by contrasting false and true, will be enabled to distinguish between them. *GOP 417.3* 

Another specific warning was given in *Selected Messages*, book 1, page 41, which says, "Soon every possible effort will be made to discount and pervert the truth of the testimonies of God's Spirit. We must have in readiness the clear, straight messages that since 1846 have been coming to God's people." *GOP 417.4* 

## **My Personal Testimony**

Why do I accept Ellen G. White's prophetic ministry? Why do I believe so concretely in the Spirit of Prophecy? As already indicated in Revelation 19:10: "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." I believe that the writings of Ellen G. White are the testimony of our Lord. They point us back to the sacred Word of God, where Paul explains in Philippians 2:5-11 that Christ took on the form of a man and became the Word in flesh. GOP 417.5

Seventh-day Adventists do not portray the Spirit of Prophecy as part of the Bible or equal to the Bible. As Ellen White herself indicated, the Spirit of Prophecy is to lead to the Bible. However, I fully believe that the Spirit of Prophecy manifested in the writings of Ellen White is inspired by the same heavenly inspiration as that of the Bible since it is the testimony of Jesus. Selected Messages, book 1, page 41, explains: GOP 417.6

Through His Holy Spirit the voice of God has come to us continually in warning and instruction, to confirm the faith of the believers in the Spirit of prophecy. Repeatedly the word has come, Write the things that I have given you to confirm the faith of My people in the position they have taken. Time and trial have not made void the instruction given, but through years of suffering and self-sacrifice have established the truth of the testimony given. The instruction that was given in the early days of the message is to be held as safe instruction to follow in these its closing days. GOP 417.7

The testimony of Jesus, which is the Spirit of Prophecy, is integral to the Advent movement. I believe that the Spirit of Prophecy is one of God's greatest gifts to the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It focuses on Christ and His Word—His all-encompassing righteousness, His plan of salvation, His grace, and His ministry in the Most Holy Place in the heavenly sanctuary. The Spirit of Prophecy portrays God's plan for His people living at this end-time and waiting for Christ's soon second coming. The final events of the great controversy are about to take place. I believe that Jesus is coming soon! *GOP 418.1* 

## **Contemporary Relevance**

The Spirit of Prophecy is as relevant today as it was when it was written. It is accurate, uplifting, instructive, and powerful as it points to Christ and to the Holy Bible. It is truly the testimony of Jesus, and that's why I believe in the prophetic ministry of Ellen White. GOP 418.2

The Spirit of Prophecy is portrayed in Revelation 12:17 as one of the two characteristics of God's last-day, remnant church. That verse says, "And the dragon [Satan] was enraged with the woman [God's church], and he went to make war with the rest [or remnant] of her offspring [or seed—God's last-day people and church], who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." GOP 418.3

The two distinctive characteristics of God's people are so plain. God's remnant people keep the commandments of God, including the vital fourth commandment. That commandment identifies who God is and indicates our submission to our Creator, who in six literal, consecutive days created this earth recently by His word and then rested on the seventh-day Sabbath. Its sacredness is God's sign of authority and the seal of His people for eternity. GOP 418.4

The first angel's call in Revelation 14:7 to worship God as the Creator automatically places upon people the responsibility to observe the seventh-day Sabbath as a memorial that honors His creative activity. A created being cannot honor his Creator while defying the Creator's command to keep holy the seventh-day Sabbath. The Sabbath will be the focal point of conflict between good and evil during the final time of trouble. The Great Controversy, page 605, says that "the Sabbath will be the great test of loyalty, for it is the point of truth especially controverted. When the final test shall be brought to bear upon men, then the line of distinction will be drawn between those who serve God and those who serve Him not." The Sabbath is a sign of our relationship with God and of our dependence on Him for creation and salvation. He gave the Sabbath to the human race as the culmination of the Creation week as described in Genesis 2 and reaffirmed at Mount Sinai. GOP 418.5

In July 2014 it was a peculiar privilege to stand on top of Mount Sinai and realize that was the area where God gave His precious Ten Commandments through His prophet Moses. Belief in God's prophets helps us realize that the seventh-day Sabbath is integral to our faith and even to our name as we show love and allegiance to our Creator and Redeemer. GOP 418.6

## The Testimony of Jesus Christ

More specifically for our topic in this symposium, the second distinctive characteristic is that God's remnant church will have the testimony of Jesus, which is the "spirit of prophecy." The commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus, or the Spirit of Prophecy, come from the same source: God Himself. GOP 419.1

The Spirit of Prophecy was given to nurture and assist God's last-day movement with instruction from heaven. He used the Spirit of Prophecy to guide in the establishment of His remnant church, the Seventh-day Adventist Church. These people would love Him supremely and follow His commandments through His power. He is using the Spirit of Prophecy to prosper His last-day church into the growing Advent movement of millions of members around the world. *GOP* 419.2

However, one of the greatest threats against the Spirit of Prophecy is not necessarily animosity but rather the threat of indifference. Today many members are unacquainted with it, don't read it, or just plain ignore it. *GOP 419.3* 

From Testimonies for the Church, volume 4, pages 390, 391, we read: GOP 419.4

The volumes of *Spirit of Prophecy* [forerunner of The Conflict of the Ages series], and also the Testimonies, should be introduced into every Sabbathkeeping family, and the brethren should know their value and be urged to read them. . . . They should be in the library of every family and read again and again. Let them be kept where they can be read by many, and let them be worn out in being read by all the neighbors. *GOP 419.5* 

The Adventist Home, page 479, indicates that the Conflict of the Ages series "should be placed in every family in the land." We thank our publishing houses, literature evangelists, and members for doing that around the world. *GOP 419.6* 

Various projects, including Connecting With Jesus, have circulated millions of Spirit of Prophecy books to the public and to church members around the world in printed and electronic form, and we

need to do much more of this. The rapid expansion of the Seventh-day Adventist Church demands that our members know in their own languages and dialects what Spirit of Prophecy counsel God has for His last-day church. *GOP 419.7* 

#### Counsels that Bear Fruit

The counsel of the Spirit of Prophecy has been instrumental in establishing publishing, health, education, humanitarian, and media institutions. The Spirit of Prophecy guides the pastoral, evangelistic, missionary, and administrative expansion of the church. The Spirit of Prophecy provides instruction in almost every aspect of life including theology, lifestyle, personal health, the family, the home, young people, interpersonal relationships, personal stewardship, and many others. The Spirit of Prophecy is guiding God's people and always will until the Lord returns. This is why I believe in Ellen G. White's prophetic ministry. *GOP 419.8* 

As a result of Spirit of Prophecy guidance, the Seventh-day Adventist Church is not just another denomination but a heaven-born Advent movement with a special destiny—a mission and message to proclaim found in Revelation 14:6-12—the three angels' messages. GOP 420.1

Testimonies for the Church, volume 9, page 19, tells us: GOP 420.2

In a special sense Seventh-day Adventists have been set in the world as watchmen and light bearers. To them has been entrusted the last warning for a perishing world. On them is shining wonderful light from the Word of God. They have been given a work of the most solemn import—the proclamation of the first, second, and third angels' messages. There is no other work of so great importance. They are to allow nothing else to absorb their attention. *GOP 420.3* 

It is why Satan attacks the Spirit of Prophecy and its important counsel from God for His last- day remnant church. *Selected Messages*, book 1, page 48, indicates: *GOP 420.4* 

There will be a hatred kindled against the testimonies which is satanic. The workings of Satan will be to unsettle the faith of the churches in them, for this reason: Satan cannot have so clear a track to bring in his deceptions and bind up souls in his delusions if the warnings and reproofs and counsels of the Spirit of God are heeded. GOP 420.5

In addition, Testimonies for the Church, volume 8, page 298,

says:GOP 420.6

We must follow the directions given through the spirit of prophecy. We must love and obey the truth for this time. This will save us from accepting strong delusions. . . . [God] has spoken to us through the testimonies to the church and through the books that have helped to make plain our present duty and the position that we should now occupy. GOP 420.7

Christ has called us to a prominent position as the "remnant of her seed," a unique movement of destiny, standing firm for His truth, proclaiming the Advent message, bearing the testimony of Jesus, turning people's eyes to Jesus, who is the center of all truth, and, through the power of the Holy Spirit, turning people back to the true worship of God and who Christ is. GOP 420.8

## **Lifting Up Jesus**

I believe in the prophetic ministry of Ellen White through the Spirit of Prophecy because it lifts up Jesus. In *Heavenly Places*, page 127, she indicates: *GOP 420.9* 

Our faith increases by beholding Jesus, who is the center of all that is attractive and lovely. The more we contemplate the heavenly, the less we see desirable and attractive in the earthly. The more continually we fix the eye of faith on Christ, in whom our hopes of eternal life are centered, the more our faith grows. *GOP 420.10* 

Another powerful reason I believe in the prophetic ministry of Ellen White through the Spirit of Prophecy is the emphasis on unity that is presented. *GOP 421.1* 

The devil knows that if he can get God's people to look to themselves and their own opinions instead of looking to Christ, he will be able to bring in dissension, disunity, and tension. It is one of his greatest tools against the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. GOP 421.2

God has called us to be participants in the greatest proclamation of truth in history—the culmination of the great controversy between Christ and Satan. God entrusts us with the task of sharing Christ. who lived a sinless life, died for us, rose again, and is now interceding on our behalf as our high priest, and who is to soon return to take us to heaven. We have been called to share the Word of God in all its power through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. In this heavenly calling we will be confronted with people who will disagree with our message and mission. We may be tempted to become discouraged with the apathy of others within the church. Whatever we may face, we should not be tempted to work independently and apart from the church. We are called to work within God's last-day remnant church not apart from it. Stay unified with your local church and with the worldwide church family. Stay close to the church regardless of its imperfections. Keep the Lord and His mission for His church always before you. GOP 421.3

A recent compilation, Counsels for the Church, pages 240-243, indicates: GOP 421.4

God has a church upon the earth who are His chosen people, who keep His commandments. He is leading, not stray offshoots, not one here and one there, but a people. . . . It is our individual duty to walk humbly with God. We are not to seek any strange, new message. GOP 421.5

We are not to think that the chosen ones of God who are trying to walk in the light compose Babylon. GOP 421.6

Although there are evils existing in the church, and will be until the end of the world, the church in these last days is to be the light of the world that is polluted and demoralized by sin. The church, enfeebled and defective, needing to be reproved, warned, and counseled, is the only object upon the earth upon which Christ bestows His supreme regard. . . . The church of God below is one with the church of God above. . . . God has bestowed the highest power under heaven upon His church. It is the voice of God in His united people in church capacity which is to be respected. *GOP* 421.7

Realize that the church is called to a great work within and without. The shaking and sifting time is coming. The Lord will do His work. It is a preparation for the loud cry in which Christ has called us to proclaim. Lift up Christ and His Holy Word. Believe in the gift of the Spirit of Prophecy. As we do this under the Holy Spirit's guidance, we will be involved in revival and reformation and brought to complete humility at the foot of the cross. God will do His work to fully prepare His people for the unbelievable events just ahead. This is why I believe in the prophetic ministry of Ellen White, who indicated in *Testimonies for the Church*, volume 1, pages 179-181: GOP 421.8

I was shown the people of God, and saw them mightily shaken. Some, with strong faith and agonizing cries, were pleading with God. . . . [Some] seemed indifferent and careless. *GOP 421.9* 

... I asked the meaning of the shaking I had seen, and was shown that it would be caused by the straight testimony called forth by the counsel of the True Witness to the Laodiceans. This will have its effect upon the heart of the receiver, and will lead him to exalt the standard and pour forth the straight truth. Some will not bear this

straight testimony. They will rise up against it, and this will cause a shaking among God's people. The testimony of the True Witness has not been half heeded. The solemn testimony upon which the destiny of the church hangs has been lightly esteemed, if not entirely disregarded. This testimony must work deep repentance, and all that truly receive it will obey it and be purified. GOP 422.1

The Word of God and the Spirit of Prophecy point to the True Witness, Jesus Christ, who has inspired both. The Spirit of Prophecy gives us great insight as to our Laodicean condition and our need of the righteousness of Christ—to be justified and sanctified by Him. This is why I believe in the prophetic ministry of Ellen White through the Spirit of Prophecy. *GOP 422.2* 

#### Practical Reasons

A more practical reason I believe in the Spirit of Prophecy is that I grew up in a home that held the Spirit of Prophecy in great respect. My father always spoke so positively and passionately about it. My mother gave such unflinching loyalty to God's Word and the Spirit of Prophecy. I never heard a scornful word or a disparaging remark from my parents about the Bible or the Spirit of Prophecy. My wonderful wife, Nancy, grew up in a home with the same positive attitude. She loves to daily read the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy, as do I. It has a tremendous influence in our home. I advanced from the early trust instilled in my heart by my parents to my own personal deep appreciation for the counsel, direction, and clarification in the Spirit of Prophecy. Parents, instill in your children a love for and confidence in God's Holy Word and the Spirit of Prophecy. As I read the Spirit of Prophecy I accept that it is inspired by God because it is the testimony of Jesus. *GOP 422.3* 

Let me share with you another practical reason I believe in the Spirit of Prophecy. About 1870 William immigrated to the United States from Ireland. He was of Scottish and Presbyterian background. He and his wife, Isabella, also from Ireland, lived for some time in Philadelphia, where he worked as an engineer building locomotives. and finally headed out west to the "big tree" area of northern California to do logging. He settled down in the area north of Healdsburg, becoming a fruit and cattle rancher and running a country store. He was not necessarily a highly religious person up to this time. Eventually William and Isabella had four sons. Isabella became a Seventh-day Adventist, but William did not. In 1905 some tents were erected north of the Russian River near Healdsburg for a Seventh-day Adventist camp meeting. Isabella went to the camp meeting even though William had initially thought the circus had come to town. Isabella invited her husband to come to the camp meeting. As William was sitting under the tent, the speaker began to unfold the wonderful truth about Jesus, sharing the need of all sinners to have a Savior and allow Him to change their lives. The speaker made an earnest appeal and, much to the surprise of Isabella, William stood up and went to the front, giving his heart to the Lord. He studied this precious Advent message for a year. He closed his store on Sabbath and trusted God for the future. He was

baptized, joining this remnant church, and later became the first elder of the Healdsburg Seventh-day Adventist Church, the forerunner location of Pacific Union College. Christ changed his life, and he became known as a generous man helping people in need. William and Isabella Wilson were my great-grandparents, and the speaker who preached so earnestly about Jesus at that camp meeting was Ellen G. White. She had purchased property in Healdsburg after James White died. My grandfather remembered Ellen White coming to their ranch home when he was a boy and how she lovingly told stories to him and his brothers as they sat at her feet. The Wilson family owes its knowledge of this precious Advent message to the direct practical and prophetic evangelistic activity of Ellen White. As a result, the Spirit of Prophecy takes on an even more personal value and is another reason I believe in the Spirit of Prophecy. GOP 422.4

What has the Spirit of Prophecy done for me personally? It has pointed me to Christ and His plan of salvation. It has pointed me back to the Bible. It has amplified many aspects of Scripture. It has given me a strong belief in the leading of God in the lives of those who commit themselves into His hands as I have observed the work of our church's pioneers. It has given me new insight to Christian living. It has drawn me closer to Christ. It has provided incredible understanding of how to accomplish our mission entrusted to us by the very One who inspired the Spirit of Prophecy. For instance, it has given me an unusual burden for Revival and Reformation, for Mission to the Cities, for comprehensive health ministry, for Christ and His righteousness, for faithfulness to God, for Total Member Involvement, of which you will hear much more, for the use of publications and media in our evangelistic outreach, for an understanding of prophecy, for the sanctuary service, for the work of departments, and on and on. It points us back to Christ and His work for us on the cross and His soon second coming. You read the Spirit of Prophecy, and you will be positively changed forever as it points us back to Christ, His ministry and His work for us in preparing a world through the Holy Spirit's leading for the new world to come after the Lord's return. The Spirit of Prophecy has given me an inexhaustible resource for implementing heaven's plans for the Advent movement, GOP 423.1

When I think about the Spirit of Prophecy, I just am thrilled with happiness that God would provide us with so much information to accomplish His will in our lives personally and for His church's mission to the world. For me personally, I am so excited to have the written Word of God and the Spirit of Prophecy. There are no better sources of clear, understandable instruction from God—these two heavenly sources of God's instruction have given me a very settled confidence in God Himself and His plans for you and me. What a wonderful God we serve! I praise Him for the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. I am so happy to be a Seventh-day Adventist and rely completely on Christ and His righteousness, which the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy explain so fully. GOP 423.2

I personally believe and attest that the writings of the Spirit of Prophecy are believable and true because Ellen G. White and her prophetic ministry pass the four tests of a prophet. 1. Her writings agree with the Bible, fulfilling Isaiah 8:20—"To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." 2. Her life and works testify of her connection with God, fulfilling Matthew 7:20—"Therefore by their fruits you will know them." 3. Her prophecies have come to pass, fulfilling Jeremiah 28:9—"As for the prophet who prophesies of peace, when the word of the prophet comes to pass, the prophet will be known as one whom the Lord has truly sent." 4. Her writings lift up Christ and affirm Him as the Son of God, who came to this earth to save us, fulfilling 1 John 4:2—"By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God." In addition, her life and work is verified by physical manifestations during visions, the timeliness of her work at the certainty and fearlessness end of time, pronouncements, the high spiritual plane of her work and the practical nature of her explanations about multiple aspects of the Christian life. GOP 423.3

It is our happy responsibility to nurture and foster the belief in and the active use of the Spirit of Prophecy. God asks us to help people believe in the prophetic gift of the Spirit of Prophecy. Do not get discouraged by anyone deriding or mocking your belief in the inspiration of the Bible or the Spirit of Prophecy. We are nearing that glorious day of Jesus' return, and He calls us to stand for

Him. GOP 424.1

"Believe in the Lord your God, and you shall be established; believe His prophets, and you shall prosper" (2 Chron. 20:20). *GOP 424.2* 

At this special symposium I appeal to each of us and the world church membership to commit ourselves completely to the proclamation of the Advent message in the context of the three angels' messages as we point people to Christ, to His righteousness, to the true worship of God, and to an understanding that God's last-day church is identified in Revelation 12:17—people who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus, which is the Spirit of Prophecy. GOP 424.3

Our Redeemer will see us through to the end because He is the origin of all truth. He is the Truth and the Word. He is the Spirit of Prophecy. He is the Coming King. GOP 424.4

One day soon we will look up and see in the eastern sky a small cloud about half the size of a man's hand. That cloud will get larger and larger and brighter and brighter. Soon it will fill the whole sky—all of heaven poured out for this climactic event of earth's history. And there, seated in the center of the cloud of angels with a rainbow above and lightning beneath, will be Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. *GOP 424.5* 

We will look up and say, "This is the God whom we have waited for: He will save us." And Christ will look down and say, "Well done, good and faithful servants—defenders and proclaimers of my precious Word and the Spirit of Prophecy—enter into the joy of your Lord." What a wonderful time that will be *GOP 424.6* 

As part of God's called people, those who keep His commandments and have the testimony of Jesus, will you join me in committing yourself, through God's grace and power, to walk with Christ daily, to spend time in His Word, to utilize the power of prayer, to believe His prophets and be enriched by a daily reading of the Spirit of Prophecy as you proclaim this Advent message? If you accept that challenge, would you stand to your feet with me right now? GOP 424.7